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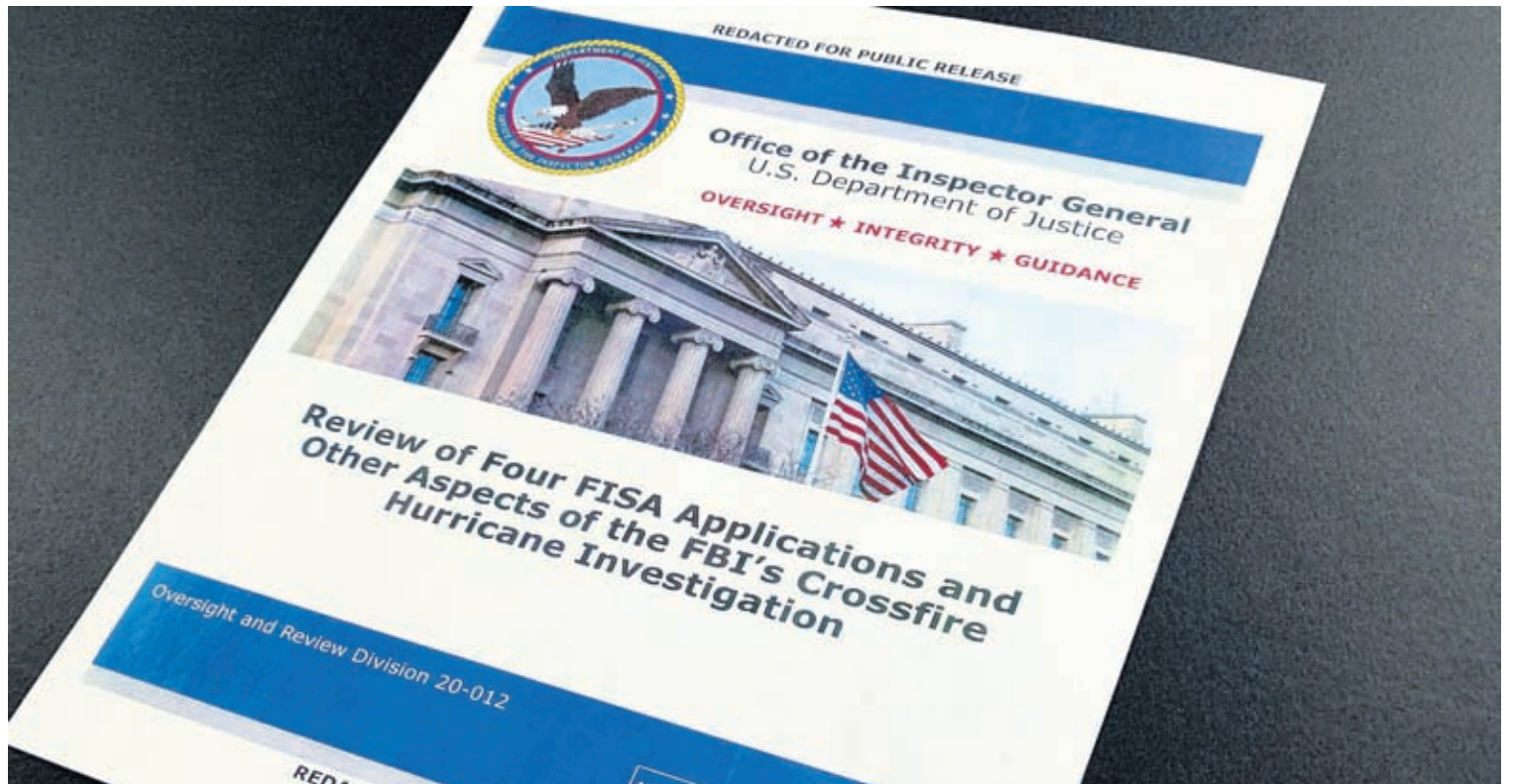
## Watchdog report: FBI's Russia probe justified, no bias found

By M. BALSAMO/E. TUCKER  
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The FBI was justified in opening its investigation into ties between the Trump presidential campaign and Russia and did not act with political bias, despite "serious performance failures" up the bureau's chain of command, the Justice Department's internal watchdog said in a highly anticipated report Monday.

The findings undercut President Donald Trump's claim that he was the target of a "witch hunt."

Yet its nuanced conclusions deny a clear-cut vindication for Trump's supporters or critics.



Continued on Page 2

The cover page of the report issued by the Department of Justice inspector general is photographed in Washington, Monday, Dec. 9, 2019.

Associated Press

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# Watchdog report: FBI's Russia probe justified, no bias found

Continued from Front

It rejects theories and criticism spread by Trump and his supporters while also finding errors and misjudgments likely to be exploited by Republican allies as the president faces a probable impeachment vote this month.

Trump, in remarks at the White House shortly after the report's release, claimed that the report showed "an attempted overthrow and a lot of people were in on it."

The president has repeatedly said he was more eager for the report of John Durham, the hand-picked prosecutor selected by Attorney General William Barr to conduct a separate review of the Russia probe.

Barr rejected the inspector general's conclusion that there was sufficient evidence to open the investigation.

"The Inspector General's report now makes clear that the FBI launched an intrusive investigation of a U.S. presidential campaign on the thinnest of suspicions that, in my view,



President Donald Trump speaks during a roundtable on school choice in the Cabinet Room of the White House, Monday, Dec. 9, 2019, in Washington.

were insufficient to justify the steps taken," Barr said in a statement. His remarks were an unusual twist in that the attorney general typically does not take issue with an internal investigation that clears a Justice Department agency of serious misconduct.

In an interview with The Associated Press, FBI Director Chris Wray said the inspec-

tor general found problems that are "unacceptable and unrepresentative of who we are as an institution." But he also noted that political bias did not taint the opening of the investigation, or the steps that followed. He said the FBI is implementing more than 40 corrective actions. Durham, in a brief statement, said he has informed the inspector general that he also doesn't agree with the conclusion that the inquiry was properly opened, and suggested his own investigation would back up that assertion.

The inspector general identified 17 "significant inaccuracies or omissions" in applications for a warrant from the secretive Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court to monitor the communications of former Trump campaign adviser Carter Page and subsequent warrant renewals. The errors, the watchdog said, resulted in "applications that made it appear that the information supporting probable cause was stronger than was actually the case."

But the report also found the bureau was justified in eavesdropping on Page and that there was not documented or testimonial evidence of any political bias.

Republicans have long criticized the process since the FBI relied in part on oppo-

sition research from a former British spy, Christopher Steele, whose work was financed by Democrats and the Clinton campaign, and that fact was not disclosed to the judges who approved the warrant.

The watchdog found that the FBI had overstated the significance of Steele's past work as an informant, omitted information about one of Steele's sources who Steele had called a "boaster" and who Steele said the source "may engage in some embellishment."

The report's release, coming the same day as a House Judiciary Committee impeachment hearing centered on the president's interactions with Ukraine, brought fresh attention to the legal and political investigations that have entangled the White House from the moment Trump took office.

The FBI's Russia investigation, which was ultimately taken over by special counsel Robert Mueller, began in July 2016 after the FBI learned that a former Trump campaign aide, George Papadopoulos, had been saying before it was publicly known that Russia had dirt on Democratic opponent Hillary Clinton in the form of stolen emails. Those emails, which were hacked from Democratic email accounts by Russian intelligence op-

eratives, were released by WikiLeaks in the weeks before the election in what U.S. officials have said was an effort to harm Clinton's campaign and help Trump. The report said the FBI was authorized to open the investigation to protect against a national security threat. Months later, the FBI sought and received the Page warrant. Officials were concerned that Page was being targeted for recruitment by the Russian government, though he has denied wrongdoing and has never been charged with a crime.

The inspector general also found that an FBI lawyer is suspected of altering an email to make it appear as if an official at another government agency had said Page was not a source for that agency, even though he was.

Agents were concerned that if Page had worked as a source for another government agency, they would've needed to tell the surveillance court about that, the report said, and tasked the lawyer with contacting the other agency to obtain additional information. But the lawyer "did not accurately convey, and in fact altered, the information he received from the other agency," the report said.

The lawyer is not identified by name in the report but people familiar with the situation have identified him as Kevin Clinesmith. The inspector general's report says officials notified the attorney general and FBI director and provided them with information about the altered email.

The inspector general conducted more than 170 interviews involving more than 100 witnesses, including former FBI director James Comey, former Attorney General Loretta Lynch, former Deputy Attorney General Sally Yates, former Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein, who oversaw the Russia investigation, and former FBI Deputy Director Andrew McCabe, along with FBI agents and analysts. □

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## Report: U.S. misled public on progress in Afghanistan war

**WASHINGTON (AP)** — The U.S. government across three White House administrations misled the public about failures in the Afghanistan war, often suggesting success where it didn't exist, according to thousands of pages of documents obtained by The Washington Post.

The documents reveal deep frustrations about America's conduct of the Afghanistan war, including the ever-changing U.S. strategy, the struggles to develop an effective Afghan fighting force and persistent failures to defeat the Taliban and combat corruption throughout the government.

"We were devoid of a fundamental understanding of Afghanistan — we didn't know what we were doing," Douglas Lute, a three-star Army general who served as the White House's Afghan war czar during the Bush and Obama administrations, told government interviewers in 2015.

The interviews were conducted as part of a "Lessons Learned" project by the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction over the past several years. SIGAR has produced seven reports so far from the more than 400 interviews, and several more are in the works. The Post sought and received raw interview data through the Freedom of Information Act and lawsuits.

The documents quote officials close to the 18-year war effort describing a campaign by the U.S. government to distort the grim reality of the war.

"Every data point was altered to present the best picture possible," Bob Crowley, an Army colonel who served as a counter-insurgency adviser to U.S.

military commanders in 2013 and 2014, told government interviewers, according to the Post. "Surveys, for instance, were totally unreliable but reinforced that everything we were doing was right and we became a self-licking ice cream cone."

The Pentagon released a statement Monday saying there has been "no intent" by the department to mislead Congress or the public.

Defense Department officials "have consistently briefed the progress and challenges associated with our efforts in Afghanistan, and DoD provides regular reports to Congress that highlight these challenges," said Lt. Col. Thomas Campbell, a department spokesman. "Most of the individuals interviewed spoke with the benefit of hindsight. Hindsight has also enabled the department to evaluate previous approaches and revise our strategy, as we did in 2017 with the launch of the president's South Asia strategy."

SIGAR has frequently been vocal about the war's failures in reports going back more than a decade, including extensive questions about vast waste in the nearly \$1 trillion spent on the conflict.

The Post said that John Sopko, the head of SIGAR, acknowledged that the documents show "the American people have constantly been lied to." SIGAR was created by Congress in 2008 to conduct audits and investigations into waste of government spending on the war in Afghanistan.

Rep. Ted Lieu, D-Calif., tweeted: "The war in Afghanistan is an epic bipartisan failure. I have long called for the withdrawal of

U.S. troops from that quagmire. Now it appears U.S. officials misled the American public about the war. It is time to leave Afghanistan. Now."

Rep. Ro Khanna, D-Calif., said in a tweet: "775,000 of our troops deployed. 2,400 American lives lost. Over 20,000 Americans wounded. 38,000 civilians killed. Trillions spent. Rumsfeld in 2003: 'I have no visibility into who the bad guys are.'"

Sarah Kreps, professor of government and international relations at Cornell University said the interviews reveal the enormous disconnect between what civilian and military leaders knew about the war and what the public knew, particularly about its costs. The Post said that while the



An Afghan boy stands on a wall near a horse tied up at a camp for internally displaced people in Kabul, Afghanistan, Monday, Dec. 9, 2019.

Associated Press

interviews contain few revelations about military operations in the war, they include a lot of criticism that refutes the narrative that officials often touted about progress being made.

James Dobbins, a former senior U.S. diplomat who served as a special envoy to Afghanistan under Bush and Obama was blunt in his assessment of the war in his interview. □

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## Grandson of late President Bush runs for Congress in Texas

By **PAUL J. WEBER**  
Associated Press

**AUSTIN, Texas (AP)** —

Pierce Bush, a grandson of former President George H.W. Bush, launched a Texas congressional run on Monday and aligned himself with President Donald Trump, who his late grandfather blasted as a "blowhard" and voted against in the 2016 campaign.

In an interview with The Associated Press, he pushed back on whether that support was difficult to summon in the face of Trump's antagonism toward his famous family, which Trump has mocked during his no-holds-barred takeover of the GOP.

"When you look at the alternative first of all, how can you be anything but a supporter of the president's policies?" Pierce Bush, 33, told the AP. "I look forward to being a partner in Washington, and speaking of course with my own voice, but supporting the president's agenda."

George H.W. Bush, who died last year, voted for Democrat Hillary Clinton in 2016. His son, President George W. Bush, didn't vote



In this Thursday, Dec. 31, 2009 file photo, former United States President George H. W. Bush, right, leaves the field with the help of Pierce Bush, left, his grandson, before the Texas Bowl NCAA college football game in Houston.

Associated Press

for either Trump or Clinton. This is about the families of "This is not about my family. the 22nd Congressional Dis-

trict," Pierce Bush said.

At least one of of Bush's rivals in the race considered him unwelcome. Greg Hill, a former Border Patrol agent who is also running as a Republican, expressed respect for the Bush family in a statement but said he had "strong doubts about any candidate who would try to parachute into our district and buy this seat."

Pierce Bush's announcement video, rolled out on the deadline in Texas for candidates to get on the 2020 ballot, includes an image of him speaking next to a picture of his late grandfather. He says in the video that the nation is "on the brink of losing a generation to an idea that socialism and free stuff are the answers to their future."

Pierce Bush, whose father is Neil Bush, has spent the past three years as chief executive of the nonprofit Big Brothers Big Sisters in Texas. He made no mention of Trump in his announcement video and launched his campaign website with only a short biography and no positions on issues or policies.

Pierce Bush told AP the im-

peachment hearings unfolding against Trump in Congress were a distraction and did not directly answer when asked whether he believed Trump had done anything improper.

"It's an attack-at-all-costs politics," Bush said of the impeachment case. "It's a part of the problem."

The only Bush currently in public office, Texas Land Commissioner George P. Bush, broke with his family in 2016 and supported Trump even after he mocked his father, former Florida Gov. Jeb Bush, as "low energy" during the 2016 presidential campaign. During a visit to Texas earlier this year, Trump introduced George P. Bush as "the only Bush that likes me."

Olson is one of six House Republicans in Texas retiring next year, and he might have faced a tougher reelection battle than any of them. Once a seat of GOP power — former Republican House Majority Leader Tom DeLay held the office before Olson — the district is rapidly shifting amid demographic changes and Democrats peeling off suburban women voters. □

## U.S. sanctions 2 Venezuelan officials for selling passports

**LUIS ALONSO LUGO**  
Associated Press

**WASHINGTON (AP)** —

The Trump administration imposed sanctions Monday on both the former and the current director of the Venezuelan government's office of identification, accusing them of receiving kickbacks involving the sale of passports.

The U.S. Treasury Department's Office of Foreign Assets Control made the designations on both Gustavo Vizcaino Gil and his predecessor, Juan Carlos

Dugarte Padron, on International Anti-Corruption Day.

Other entities in Cambodia, China, Latvia and Serbia were also designated Monday.

"Corruption deprives people of their countries' resources, basic essential services, and economic opportunities, while it enriches a select few and facilitates environmental destruction, political instability, and conflict," Treasury Secretary Steven T. Mnuchin said.

The designation announce-

ment said that under Vizcaino's leadership, the identification department sold Venezuelan passports to non-Venezuelan citizens for thousands of dollars each. Vizcaino was director general of the office from April 2016 until June 2018, when Dugarte replaced him.

A Treasury department official described the operation as a "large corruption scheme" in which thousand of passports were sold.

The official, who insisted on not being quoted by name because they were not au-

thorized to talk to reporters, said the cooperation from members of Venezuela's opposition-controlled National Assembly allowed investigators to identify bank accounts associated with Vizcaino and Dugarte, both in Venezuela and overseas.

The official said the sale of passports to non-Venezuelans is a matter of concern because U.S. authorities know members of the Islamic militant group Hezbollah possess Venezuelan passports, though the offi-

cial stressed that there is no evidence the two men designated Monday provided Hezbollah with Venezuelan passports.

As a result of the U.S. action, any assets of the two designated Venezuelan officials in U.S. territory will be frozen.

The U.S. has imposed sanctions on dozens of officials loyal to Venezuela's socialist president, Nicolas Maduro, whose 2018 re-election has been deemed fraudulent by Washington and at least 50 other countries. □



## Feds defend creation of fake school to fight visa fraud

**FARMINGTON HILLS, Mich. (AP)** — Federal agencies have pushed back against criticism that they entrapped hundreds of foreigners who enrolled in a fake school the agencies opened in an effort to fight visa fraud, saying those who enrolled knew they weren't signing up for a real school and that they only wanted a way to stay in the U.S. The undercover operation that targeted students at

the University of Farmington in Farmington Hills was legal and helped combat visa fraud, the U.S. attorney for the Eastern District of Michigan and head of the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement's investigative division in Detroit said Friday in statements to the Detroit Free Press. "HSI special agents, as part of this undercover operation, made it abundantly clear in their interactions with potential University of

Farmington enrollees that the school did not offer academic or vocational programs of any kind. The individuals who enrolled in the University of Farmington did so intentionally," said Vance Callender, special agent in charge of the Detroit office of ICE's Homeland Security Investigations, or HSI. The students arrived in the U.S. legally, primarily from India, and were on F-1 student visa programs when they enrolled at the university that was covertly staffed by undercover agents and had a fake website. Nearly 80% of the 250 students who were arrested have voluntarily left the country, according to ICE. Lawyers for the students have said they believe their clients were entrapped and did not know the school was fake when they enrolled. In January, federal prosecutors announced that ICE agents had secretly set up



This 2017 handout photo provided by Matt Friedman shows an office for the University of Farmington in Farmington Hills, Mich. Associated Press

## Census Bureau head says IT concerns are being remedied

**By MIKE SCHNEIDER ORLANDO, Fla. (AP)** — Information technology problems at the U.S. Census Bureau have been fixed or are in the process of being remedied, despite recent reports raising concerns about the bureau's preparedness for the 2020 Census, the agency's director said Monday. Census Bureau director Steven Dillingham said in a brief interview with The Associated Press during a visit in Florida that the agency's IT systems are undergoing "some tremendous testing." "There were some previous reports ... that have been overcome by events in that we have made the progress needed in remediating them," Dillingham said while visiting Orlando City Hall. Dillingham was in Florida to promote the Census Bureau's efforts to recruit and hire as many as 500,000 temporary workers for next spring's 2020 Census. The once-a-decade head count is the largest peacetime operation by the federal government. The peak recruiting season starts next month. An Inspector General's report last month said the Census Bureau count could be hampered by underperforming computer systems for hiring and payroll. Because of inadequate

infrastructure or software inefficiencies, they were unable to perform at the scale needed to support peak recruiting for the 2020 Census, the report said. "There are sometimes some delays, but those delays are being remedied and I think we are in a great position, so we should have everything operating very well," Dillingham said Monday. In response to the Inspector General's report, the Census Bureau said last month that the report relied on an "outdated" draft of a document that was no longer current. Separately, a news report by Reuters last week said a contractor-built website for the Census Bureau was hacked from IP addresses in Russia during 2018 testing of census systems. The news agency cited two unnamed security sources who said there was no resulting damage or stolen data. The Census Bureau in a statement last week said it was looking at the concerns, "even though this story, as published, contains inaccuracies and outdated information..." "When it comes to IT security, we have been working on that for years," Dillingham said Monday. "We are working with the best minds in the private and public sector."q

the fake university, which enrolled more than 600 foreign students studying science and technology. The Department of Justice referred to it as a "pay to stay" scheme. The Free Press reported in November that the number of students who had been arrested on immigration infractions in the case had jumped to 250. The story drew widespread attention and several political leaders criticized or raised questions about the sting. Among the critics were several congressional Democrats, including Rep. Elissa Slotkin of Michigan,

Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez of New York, Sen. Kamala Harris of California and Sen. Elizabeth Warren of Massachusetts, who is running for president. "This is cruel and appalling," Warren tweeted about the sting. "These students simply dreamed of getting the high-quality higher education America can offer. ICE deceived and entrapped them, just to deport them." The case "raises a number of serious questions, and I'll be following up to ensure they are answered," Slotkin said on Saturday. □

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# Accidental shootings by police expose training shortfalls

By **MARTHA BELLISLE**

**Associated Press**

**SEATTLE (AP)** — When an Iowa mother tried to take her child from her husband during an argument on a snowy sidewalk in 2015, an officer stepped in to stop the scuffle. But he accidentally fired his weapon as a dog approached, killing the woman as her family watched in horror.

When a Minnesota sergeant stopped a motorcyclist after a 2015 high-speed chase, he stepped out of his patrol car with his firearm drawn, flush with adrenaline, and accidentally shot the man in the arm.

And an Arkansas police officer fatally shot a suspect in 2012 as she tried to get him into handcuffs.

Accidental shootings by law enforcement have happened in recent years at agencies small and large and at all levels — city, county, state and federal — across the U.S., an Associated Press investigation has found. They've caused hundreds of injuries to officers, their partners, suspects and bystanders, and sometimes they've caused deaths.

Experts say it's because officers don't get the training they need to handle their guns proficiently, especially in life-and-death situations. The methods used to train officers with their firearms "create the illusion of learning" but are inadequate for the demands of today's policing, said Bill Lewinski, executive director of the Illinois-based Force Science Institute, which provides research and training to law enforcement agencies.

Officers are most proficient with their guns immediately after finishing a police academy, experts say. After that, most are tested only once or twice a year in "qualifications" that measure a minimum level of firearms proficiency. There are no federal guidelines for these tests so there are thousands of different standards across the county. No one tracks these shootings nationwide, so the AP collected media reports

and surveyed agencies across the country through public records requests. The review was not compre-

with her husband and trying to grab their 3-year-old son from him outside their Burlington home when Offi-

and reached a \$2 million settlement. Hill's lawyer did not respond to a request for comment



**In this July 16, 2019, photo, a King County Sheriff's deputy holds a training weapon as he practices a traffic stop during a class at Washington state's Basic Law Enforcement Academy in Burien, Wash.**

**Associated Press**

hensive due to the sheer number of U.S. law enforcement agencies and a lack of reporting requirements for such shootings. But it provides a snapshot of the problem, documenting 1,422 unintentional discharges since 2012 at 258 agencies.

The tally includes any incident in which a gun went off and the officer didn't intend it to, whether they were cleaning or unloading a weapon or surging with adrenaline while responding to a call. Some shootings occurred because of muscle reflexes, experts said, or because the officer simply tripped.

Countless law enforcement officers safely perform their duties every day, but some experts say even a small number of accidental shootings is unacceptable because they're preventable.

"Ninety-nine out of 100 times, there is not something wrong with the gun," said Paul Markel, a former police officer and firearms instructor in Mississippi. "It's the person holding it."

In the 2015 Iowa case, Autumn Steele was arguing

cer Jesse Hill approached. The husband, Gabe Steele, had called 911.

But the couple's dog darted toward Hill, and he lost his balance and fired two shots as he fell backward in the snow. One bullet hit the dog, the other hit 34-year-old Autumn Steele, killing her.

The AP found 21 cases where people died in accidental shootings by police. It identified another 134 cases where the officer injured himself, and 45 where an accidental discharge injured another officer. An officer accidentally shot innocent bystanders in 34 instances and suspects in 19. Unintentional shootings typically lead to two investigations: An outside agency determines if charges should be filed, and internal review examines whether policies were violated and punishment such as suspension is appropriate.

In Autumn Steele's case, a prosecutor compared the evidence against Iowa's homicide statutes and decided Hill could not be charged. Steele's family filed a wrongful death suit against the officer and city

from the AP. Gabe Steele, 40, thinks Hill should have been held accountable.

"He just got to go on vacation and get paid for it, for taking my son's mother away," Steele told the AP. "No one has ever apologized to me and my son. That hurts."

Agencies have different terms for these shootings, including "accidental," "negligent," or "unintentional" discharges.

But Doug Tangen, firearms program manager at Washington state's law enforcement training center, argues they are all caused by a degree of negligence because at some point the officer violated one or more of the four universal firearms safety rules: Assume all guns are loaded, always point the muzzle in a safe direction, keep your finger off the trigger, and be sure of your target and what is beyond it.

In some cases, the officer was hyped up due to adrenaline, which can severely impair the senses. Other accidental shootings have been attributed to muscle reflexes — one hand or arm jerks or con-

tracts, causing the other hand or arm to jerk or contract.

Experts agree the way to reduce them is to rethink training, starting with the amount required.

While all academies require cadets to undergo a certain number of hours of firearms instruction, the AP found how many varies widely.

Georgia, Illinois and Indiana, for example, call for 40 hours of specific firearms training. Washington state requires 90, but once officers go to work for a department, the amount of additional training they receive is uncertain, said Sean Hendrickson, an instructor at the Washington State Criminal Justice Training Commission, which trains the state's police and sheriff's deputies.

Another issue is the type of training used. Most academies employ "block and silo" methods, which bombard officers with information and make it difficult to retain, experts say.

What's lacking are standards for firearms training at the academy and throughout an officer's career.

Some private firearms training companies have responded by offering free classes for law enforcement.

Missouri-based My Brothers 6 sells T-shirts to help fund training for officers through another group, Shield Solutions. Lighthouse Tactical, based in Alabama, offers similar deals.

"The basic training an officer receives at the police academy is a base to work from," said Lighthouse owner Curt Carpenter, a retired officer. "The problem is that the academy is often all the training an officer gets." □





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Police officers detain demonstrators during a protest in Santiago, Chile, Saturday, Dec. 7, 2019.

Associated Press

## U.N.D.P. says Latin America is wealthier but unequal

CLAUDIA TORRENS  
Associated Press

**NEW YORK (AP)** — Latin America has significantly reduced poverty over the last two decades. So why is there generalized discontent, prompting thousands of protesters to take to the streets?

A report from the U.N. Development Programme released Monday concluded it's due to a new kind of inequality, no longer distinguished as much by income, but rather by the lack of equity, environmental development, and gaps in technology and education.

"Inequality in a context of economic growth, as there had been, generated aspirations that haven't been satisfied," Luis López-Calva, the UNDP's director for Latin America and the Caribbean, said in an interview with the Associated Press.

"Other manifestations of inequality are more evident, like segregation, lack of social mobility, not having a voice in politics."

The UNDP's report, titled "Beyond income, beyond averages, beyond today: Inequalities in human development in the 21st century," highlights that countries can't focus on economic activity at any cost, but rather should concentrate on inclusive growth.

For example, countries with very high human development indices (HDI) have subscription to broadband services growing at a rate 15 times faster than that of countries with low HDI readings.

Further, children of professionals in the U.S. hear three times as many words as those in families receiving welfare benefits, which affects performance on exams later in life. □



This June 29, 2018 photo shows tanks at the Enbridge Energy terminal in Superior, Wis.

Associated Press

## No major impacts on Lake Superior found from Line 3 pipeline

By STEVE KARNOWSKI  
Associated Press

**MINNEAPOLIS (AP)** — An updated environmental review released by a state agency Monday found no serious threat to Lake Superior if crude oil ever leaked from a new pipeline to replace Enbridge Energy's aging Line 3 across northern Minnesota.

State regulators ordered the update after the Minnesota Court of Appeals in June declared that an earlier review, issued in February 2018, was inadequate because it failed to specifically address the potential impacts of a spill into the Lake Superior watershed. Line 3 carries Canadian crude from Alberta and clips a corner of North Dakota on its way across Minnesota to Enbridge's termi-

nal in Superior, Wisconsin. The replacement would double the capacity of the existing line, which was built in the 1960s and is increasingly subject to cracking and corrosion. Environmental and tribal groups have been fighting the project because of the potential for spills in the Mississippi River headwaters region — an important wild rice growing area — and other pristine waters, and because the oil would contribute to climate change.

The update issued by the state Department of Commerce modeled the potential impacts of a spill where the replacement pipeline would cross Little Otter Creek. The department said a spill there would be more likely to enter the St. Louis River, with the poten-

tial for flowing downstream into Lake Superior, than other sites it could have modeled.

A public comment period on the update runs through Jan. 16. Interested parties will also be allowed to comment in person before an administrative law judge in Duluth on Dec. 19.

Officials with Enbridge, based in Calgary, Alberta, welcomed the report. They told reporters that if the Public Utilities Commission deems the update adequate, they hope to start construction of the Minnesota and North Dakota segments of the replacement pipeline in mid-2020. Construction would then take seven to nine months. The upgraded Canadian and Wisconsin segments are already in service. □



## 650 House seats, 3 days to go: the UK election in numbers

By **JILL LAWLESS**  
Associated Press

**LONDON (AP)** — There are just three days to go until Britons vote in an election that will determine not only who governs the U.K., but when, how — or even whether — the country leaves the European Union. As the parties scramble to secure the support of wavering and undecided voters, here's a look at some key numbers in the contest:

46 million: The number of eligible voters in the U.K.

650: The number of seats in the House of Commons, all up for grabs in the election. Any party that wins a majority can form a government, with its leader as prime minister. If no party has a majority, it's more complicated. The biggest party could try to form a minority government, or party leaders could form a coalition or alliance to govern together.

298: The number of seats held before the election by Prime Minister Boris Johnson's ruling Conservatives — more than 20 short of a majority. The government's lack of a majority meant it struggled to pass key measures needed for Britain to leave the European Union. Johnson says if he wins a majority he will "get Brexit done."



Liberal Democrat Leader Jo Swinson meets supporters during a visit, while on the General Election campaign, in Sheffield, England, Sunday, Dec. 8, 2019.

243: The number of seats held by the left-of-center opposition Labour Party, which is battling to return to office for the first time since 2010. Labour is trying to downplay Brexit and focus on its plans to spend more on health care, education and social welfare, nationalize utilities and key industries and give everyone free internet access.

96: The number of years since Britain last had a December election. British elections are usually held in the late spring, when the weather is better and the

days are longer.

53: The number of days until Britain is due to leave the EU. Brexit day was supposed to be Oct. 31, but with Britain's politicians deadlocked, the EU granted a three-month delay until Jan. 31.

More than 70: The number of lawmakers not running for re-election amid Britain's toxic political atmosphere. Politicians on both sides of the Brexit argument have received abuse and threats. Those leaving include many moderate pro-EU Conservatives, Labour

legislators who say their party has not stamped out anti-Semitism and high-profile female legislators, who have received a disproportionate amount of abuse.

42.8%: The portion of political parties' campaign spending that went to digital advertising during the last election in 2017 — up from just 0.3% in 2011. It's expected to be even more this time.

35: The number of seats in Parliament held by the Scottish National Party, which opposes Brexit and

wants Scotland to leave the U.K. and become an independent country.

20: The number of seats held in Parliament by the pro-EU Liberal Democrats, who want to cancel Brexit altogether.

19.5 million pounds (\$25 million): The maximum a party can spend on advertising, campaigning costs and other expenses if it contests all 650 constituencies across the U.K. The spending limit is calculated at 30,000 pounds (\$38,650) per seat.

9: Number of years the Conservative Party has been in power.

3: The number of smaller pro-EU parties that have joined together in a tactical voting plan: the Liberal Democrats, the Greens and the Welsh party Plaid Cymru. They have pledged not to run against each other in dozens of seats to make it more likely that pro-EU candidates will prevail.

0: The number of seats in Parliament now held by the recently formed Brexit Party, which wants to leave the EU without a divorce deal. The party, led by Nigel Farage, hopes to change that but is not running in over 300 Conservative strongholds to avoid splitting the pro-Brexit vote. □

## Pension strikes cripple Paris, more travel woes ahead

By **NADINE ACHOUI-LES-AGE**

**ANGELA CHARLTON**

Associated Press

**PARIS (AP)** — Paris commuters inched to work Monday through massive traffic jams as strikes against retirement plan changes halted trains and subways for a fifth straight day — with the prospect of a tougher day ahead. French President Emmanuel Macron girded for one of the toughest weeks of his presidency as his government prepares to present a redesign of the convoluted French pension system. Macron sees melding 42 different retirement

plans into one as delivering a more equitable, financially sustainable system. Unions view the move as



Railway workers votes during a meeting of the CGT union in Rennes, western France, Monday, Dec. 9, 2019.

Associated Press

an attack on the French way of life even though Macron's government is not expected to change the current retirement age of 62. The national road authority reported more than 600 kilometers (360 miles) of traffic problems at morning rush hour around the Paris region — up from 150 kilometers (90 miles) on an average day.

Paris police girded for a huge pension protest march on Tuesday, similar to the one last Thursday when more than 800,000 people across France took part. Fearing possible violence on its fringes, police

warned they would mobilize significant resources immediately to stop violence. All restaurants and shops along the march route were ordered closed, police said.

Air France, the national carrier, said more than 25% of its domestic traffic would be grounded Tuesday by the strike, along with more than 10% of its medium-haul flights. Long-haul trips were not to be affected. It said the French civil aviation authority had asked all airlines to cut back flights 20% on Tuesday at six airports, including Paris, Bordeaux and Marseille. □



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## Too much of a Greta thing? Activist urges focus on others

FRANK JORDANS  
ARITZ PARRA  
Associated Press

**MADRID (AP)** — With dozens of cameras pointing at her across a room full of reporters, celebrity teen environmentalist Greta Thunberg had an unexpected message: Look the other way.

"Our stories have been told over and over again," the 16-year-old Swede said, explaining why she and prominent German activist Luisa Neubauer would be handing over the stage at the U.N. climate meeting in Madrid to other young activists.

"It's really about them," Thunberg added of the young activists from developing countries already facing the effects of climate change, including violent storms, droughts and rising sea levels. "We talk about our future, they talk about their present." Thunberg has become the face of the youth climate movement, drawing large crowds with her appearances at protests and conferences over the past year and a half.

Veteran campaigners and scientists have welcomed



Climate activist Greta Thunberg, centre, stands with other young activists at the COP25 Climate summit in Madrid, Spain, Monday, Dec. 9, 2019.

her activism, including her combative speeches challenging world leaders to do more to stop global warming. But some say that it's time to put the spotlight on other young activists who also have a strong story to tell about climate change. "Greta and other youth leaders have been an incredible inspiration and catalyzed a whole group of young people," said

Jennifer Morgan, the executive director of Greenpeace International. "And I think that the media needs to do a better job at covering that."

Thunberg and those close to her appeared to agree. Neubauer, a 23-year-old who has become the face of the Fridays for Future student movement in Germany, said the focus on her and Thunberg was "incred-

ibly disproportionate."

Thunberg was met by a crowd of cameras as she arrived in Portugal last week, having sailed back to Europe to avoid air travel for environmental reasons. On Friday, she left a protest march through the Spanish capital early after being mobbed by crowds of protesters and reporters.

"We want to break this up," Neubauer told The Associ-

ated Press. Thunberg said she felt a "moral duty" to use the media's attention to promote others who have struggled to get the limelight.

"It is people especially from the global south, especially from indigenous communities, who need to tell their stories," she said before handing the microphone to young environmentalists from around the globe.

Among them was Kisha Erah Muaña, a 23-year-old activist from the Philippines, who called on global leaders to take "robust and lasting action" against climate change. "I am from Russia, where everyone can be arrested for anything," said Arshak Makichyan, a 25-year-old violinist from Moscow. "But I am not afraid to be arrested. I'm afraid not to do enough." Thunberg's angry accusations that world leaders are failing the younger generation have made headlines, including her shouts of "How dare you?" at the U.N. General Assembly earlier this year. However, politicians have, by and large, praised Thunberg and her movement as an important voice of her generation. □

## EU weighs response to Turkey-Libya maritime border deal

Associated Press

**Brussels (AP)** — European Union foreign ministers debated Monday how to respond to a controversial agreement between Turkey and Libya that could give Turkey access to a contested economic zone across the Mediterranean Sea. The maritime border deal, endorsed by the Turkish parliament last week,

has fueled tensions in Turkey's long-running dispute with Greece, Cyprus and Egypt over oil and gas drilling rights in the eastern Mediterranean. Greece has already expelled the Libyan ambassador over it. Before chairing the meeting, new EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell said that "it's not a matter of sanctions today." He said the

ministers would study a "memorandum of understanding" agreed upon between Turkey and Libya, which was only made public in recent days.

Austrian Foreign Minister Alexander Schallenberg said "it's a little bit astounding how they split up the Mediterranean among themselves. We'll have to see how we deal with it."

Greece, Cyprus, and Egypt, which lie between Turkey and Libya geographically, have blasted the accord as being contrary to international law. Some EU partners of Greece and Cyprus seem to agree.

"The Netherlands is always a staunch supporter of the rule of international law, and we side with Greece," said Dutch Foreign Minister

Stef Blok. "International law should be upheld."

Although they are NATO allies, neighbors Greece and Turkey are divided by a series of decades-old issues, including territorial disputes in the Aegean Sea, and have come to the brink of war three times since the 1970s, including once over drilling rights in the Aegean. □



# Charity: Over 110 Yemeni children killed in 2 Yemeni areas in 2019

By **SAMY MAGDY**  
Associated Press

**CAIRO (AP)** — Over 110 Yemeni children were killed between January and October in the key port city of Hodeida and a southwestern province, an international charity said Monday. Save the Children said in a report that 56 children were killed and 170 wounded as a direct result of fighting in Hodeida, despite a cease-fire there between Yemen's internationally recognized government and the Houthi rebels that was brokered by the U.N. last December in Sweden. "The Stockholm Agreement brought a glimmer of hope to civilians in the area, but the fighting is far from over," said Mariam Aldogani, Save the Children's field manager for Hodeida. The city serves as a main passageway for aid and a lifeline for Houthi-controlled areas. The charity said it was forced to close some of its children's centers in Hodeida for three months this year due to security fears



In this Sept. 3, 2015, file photo people walk at the site of a car bomb attack next to a Shiite mosque in Sanaa, Yemen.

Associated Press

as a result of shelling by the warring parties. The U.N.-brokered deal, which also included a prisoner swap, has prevented massive humanitarian suffering in Yemen but has yet to be fully implemented. Another 57 children were killed in the province of Taiz

in the first ten months of this year, more than double the toll in 2018 when 28 children were killed, the charity said. The fighting also wounded 49 children in Taiz. "Every day we receive wounded children in Save the Children-supported hospitals needing

our care. In 2019, our team has given medical care to more than 500 children who have been caught up in this conflict, some with life-threatening injuries," Aldogani said. She said that in once instance, Save the Children simultaneously treated

six wounded children from two families, some of whom had broken legs and shrapnel wounds across their bodies. "I cannot forget the youngest girl, just three years old, with burns all over her hands" she said. "We need to stop this war on children," she added. The conflict in Yemen began with the 2014 takeover of the capital, Sanaa, by Iranian-backed Houthi rebels who control much of the country's north. A Saudi-led coalition allied with the internationally recognized government has been fighting the Houthis since March 2015. In the relentless campaign, Saudi-led airstrikes have hit schools, hospitals and wedding parties and killed thousands of Yemeni civilians. The Houthis have used drones and missiles to attack Saudi Arabia. The war has killed over 100,000 people and created the world's worst humanitarian crisis, leaving millions suffering from food and medical shortages. □

## Vandals damage cars in Arab neighborhood of east Jerusalem

Associated Press

**JERUSALEM (AP)** — Vandals slashed the tires of over 160 vehicles and sprayed slogans such as "Arabs=enemies" in a Palestinian neighborhood of Israeli-annexed east Jerusalem, Israeli police said Monday. Elsewhere, Palestinian residents of the volatile West Bank city of Hebron staged a general strike to protest the construction of a new Jewish settlement there. Masked suspects operated under the cover of darkness to vandalize the cars in east Jerusalem's Shuafat neighborhood and spray-painted Hebrew graffiti on a nearby wall, police spokesman Micky Rosenfeld said. He said the authorities were treating the incident as criminal with "nationalistic motives." Jerusalem Mayor Moshe Lion con-



A Palestinian demonstrator hurls stones at Israeli troops during a protest in the West Bank city of Hebron, Monday, Dec. 9, 2019.

Associated Press

demned the "hate crime" and called upon the police "to find the criminals as fast as possible and bring them to justice." The graffiti included the phrases

"When Jews are stabbed, we aren't silent," and "There is no place in the land for enemies." Hard-line nationalist Israelis have been known to execute

so-called "price tag" attacks against Palestinians in response to Palestinian militant attacks or perceived efforts by Israeli authorities to limit settlement

expansion. It was unclear what motivated Monday's incident. In Hebron, the West Bank's largest city, Palestinian shops, schools and businesses were shuttered for the one-day strike. Some youngsters hurled stones at Israeli military patrols, and soldiers fired tear gas and rubber bullets to disperse the crowds. Israel's new defense minister, Naftali Bennett, presented his plan for a new settlement there early this month. Bennett, a longtime supporter of the West Bank settlement movement, said his plan will double the Jewish population of Hebron. Hebron is frequent flashpoint of violence. Hundreds of hard-line Jewish settlers guarded by thousands of soldiers live in the heart of the city, which has a population of over 200,000 Palestinians. □





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# China claims everyone in Xinjiang camps has 'graduated'

By YANAN WANG  
Associated Press

**BEIJING (AP)** — People who were at vocational training centers in China's far west Xinjiang have all "graduated" and are living happy lives, an official said Monday. But Uighurs and other predominantly Muslim ethnic minorities from the region say their family members continue to be arbitrarily detained in camps and prisons. Shohrat Zakir, Xinjiang's Uighur governor, made the remarks during a press briefing as part of a strident propaganda campaign launched following U.S. Congress' approval last week of the Uighur Human Rights Policy Act.

"When the lives of people of all ethnic groups in Xinjiang were seriously threatened by terrorism, the U.S. turned a deaf ear," Zakir said at a press briefing. "On the contrary, now that Xinjiang society is steadily developing and people of all ethnicities are living and



Shohrat Zakir, chairman of China's Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region, center, waits for questions during a press conference in Beijing on Monday, Dec. 9, 2019.

Associated Press

working in peace, the U.S. feels uneasy, and attacks and smears Xinjiang." The U.S. legislation condemns the mass detentions of an estimated more than 1 million Uighurs, Kazakhs

and others. It also raises possible sanctions against Chinese government officials deemed responsible for human rights abuses in Xinjiang. Former detainees and their

relatives have told The Associated Press that the centers for "re-education" were essentially prisons where they were forced to renounce Islam and express gratitude to the rul-

ing Communist Party. They were subject to indoctrination and torture, the detainees said.

While Chinese authorities have described the detentions as a form of vocational training, classified documents recently leaked to a consortium of news organizations revealed a deliberate strategy to lock up ethnic minorities even though they had not committed any crimes. Xu Hairong, the Communist Party chief of Urumqi city, Xinjiang's capital, did not dispute the documents' authenticity. He said, however, that there was no such thing as "detention camps."

"The reports by The New York Times, the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists and other foreign media organizations are purely malicious attempts to smear and discredit Xinjiang's vocational education centers and its counter-terrorism and deradicalization efforts," Xu said. □

## Flamboyant governor of Kenya's capital charged with graft

TOM ODULA  
Associated Press

**NAIROBI, Kenya (AP)** — The flamboyant governor of Kenya's capital city, Nairobi, was Monday charged with 19 counts of graft-related charges as the country struggles to tackle runaway corruption.

Mike Gideon Mbuvi, widely known as Mike Sonko, denied the charges including embezzlement and money laundering. The Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission alleges Mbuvi awarded contracts to friends' companies, which after receiving payment, wired to Mbuvi's accounts Kenyan

shillings worth thousands of dollars.

Mbuvi is known for controversy and his flamboyant lifestyle, like wearing gold rings, chains, watches and clothes. He prefers being called "Sonko" which means rich man in Kenya's Sheng slang.

A heavy police presence was deployed in the capital ahead of his court appearance after police said there was information that his supporters were planning demonstrations.

Mbuvi was arrested on Friday, after one of the biggest manhunts in Kenyan history that involved up to 200 police officers and a

helicopter. He was found in the town of Voi, 204 miles (329 kilometers) from the capital.

A scuffle ensued, captured on video in which about 10 police officers are seen attempting to take Mbuvi into the helicopter as he resisted, wearing one shoe. Police have said they will charge him for resisting arrest. Mbuvi's lawyer, Cecil Miller Jr., said Mbuvi suffered rib fractures from his encounter with the police. Mbuvi has denied attempting to escape saying the Ethic and Anti-Corruption Commission should have just summoned him. The state asked the court



Nairobi governor Mike Gideon Mbuvi appears with other suspects accused of corruption, at the Mililani law court in Nairobi, Kenya, Monday Dec. 9, 2019.

Associated Press

to deny Mbuvi bail because he was a flight risk. The court has moved bail application hearing to Wednesday and ordered

Mbuvi be held in a remand prison until the application is determined. This is the latest high-level. □



# Up to 13 feared dead in volcanic eruption off New Zealand

By **MARK BAKER**  
**NICK PERRY**

**Associated Press**

**WHAKATANE, New Zealand**

**(AP)** — A volcano off the New Zealand coast erupted Monday with a towering blast of ash and scalding steam as dozens of tourists were exploring its moon-like surface, killing five people and leaving eight others missing and feared dead, authorities said.

Helicopter crews landed on White Island despite the danger and helped evacuate the dozens of survivors, some of them critically injured.

Hours after the disaster, authorities said the site was still too dangerous for rescuers to search for the missing. But aircraft flew over the island repeatedly, and "no signs of life have been seen at any point," Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern said.

The missing and injured included New Zealanders and tourists from the U.S., China, Australia, Britain and Malaysia, the prime minister said. Some of those who were exploring the volcano were passengers from the Royal Caribbean cruise ship *Ovation of the Seas*, docked on neighboring North Island.

"My god," Michael Schade tweeted as he posted video of the eruption. "My family and I had gotten off it 20 minutes before, were waiting at our boat about to leave when we saw it. Boat ride home tending to



**This aerial photo shows White Island after its volcanic eruption in New Zealand Monday, Dec. 9, 2019.**

**Associated Press**

people our boat rescued was indescribable."

His video showed a wall of ash and steam around White Island and a helicopter heavily damaged and covered in ash. He said one woman was badly injured but seemed "strong" by the end.

The terrifying disaster immediately raised questions of why people were allowed to visit the island some 30 miles (50 kilometers) off mainland New Zealand after scientists had noted an uptick in volcanic activity in recent weeks. White Island is the tip of an undersea volcano.

Authorities said 47 people were on the island at the

time. Some were walking along the rim of the crater just before the eruption. In addition to the dead and missing, 31 survivors were hospitalized and three others were released, officials said. Some of the victims were reported severely burned.

The eruption took place about 2 p.m. and consisted of two explosions in quick succession, the prime minister said. It sent a plume of steam and ash an estimated 12,000 feet (3,660 meters) into the air.

One of the boats that returned from the island was covered with ash half a meter (yard) thick, Ardern said.

The GeoNet agency, which monitors volcanoes and earthquakes in New Zealand, had raised the alert level on White Island on Nov. 18 from 1 to 2 on a scale where 5 represents a major eruption, noting an increase in sulfur dioxide gas, which originates from magma deep in the volcano. It also said that volcanic tremors had increased from weak to moderate strength.

Ardern said White Island is a "very unpredictable volcano," and questions about whether tourists should be visiting will have to be addressed, "but for now, we're focused on those who are caught up in this horrific

event." Brad Scott, a volcanologist with research group GNS Science, said the alert level on White Island is often raised and then dropped without any eruption. He said there hadn't been any major problems with tourists visiting the island in the past, though there had been some close calls.

He would not venture an opinion on whether it was safe enough for tourists immediately before Monday's eruption.

After the disaster, GeoNet raised its alert level to 4, later dropping it to 3.

"In the scheme of things, for volcanic eruptions, it is not large," said Ken Gledhill from GeoNet. "But if you were close to that, it is not good."

White Island is New Zealand's most active cone volcano. About 70% of the volcano lies under the sea. Twelve people were killed on the island in 1914 when it was being mined for sulfur. Part of a crater wall collapsed and a landslide destroyed the miners' village and the mine itself.

The remains of buildings from another mining enterprise in the 1920s are now a tourist attraction. The island became a private scenic reserve in 1953, and daily tours allow more than 10,000 people to visit every year.

The island is also known by the indigenous Maori name Whakaari. □

## Evo Morales' party to seek consensus candidates in Bolivia

By **PAOLA FLORES**  
**Associated Press**

**LA PAZ, Bolivia (AP)** — The political movement of former President Evo Morales says it will seek consensus candidates for its presidential ticket in the country's new elections and will spend at least a month more consulting its bases. The announcement came after a gathering Saturday of the Movement Toward Socialism, or MAS, in the central city of Cochabamba failed to decide on candidates.



**Bolivia's former President Evo Morales leaves after attending a press conference at the journalists' club in Mexico City, Wednesday, Nov. 27, 2019.**

**Associated Press**

Party leaders said Morales would be its campaign chief for the elections,

which were called when a Oct. 20 vote in which Morales' claimed victory to

a fourth straight term was canceled. The date of the new vote has not yet been set. Party communications secretary Gualberto Arispe said the decision on candidates would be postponed until the next gathering in a month's time. In the meantime, the party will consult with its social and indigenous bases to find consensus candidates, MAS lawmaker Juan Cala said.

"There are different currents, some which want to rapidly name a pair

(of candidates), but no. The time that is necessary needs to be taken, because the candidates need to emerge from the social, indigenous bases," Cala said. Meanwhile, two opposition figures who had led anti-Morales protests — Luis Fernando Camacho and Marcos Pumari — decided that they will each mount presidential candidacies and not run together. Former President Carlos Mesa still hasn't said who his running mate will be. □



# LOCAL



## 22 visits for the Stewarts



EAGLE BEACH — Julie and Tom Stewart from New Jersey were recently honored as Goodwill Ambassadors due to their 22nd consecutive visit to Aruba. Marouska Heyliger representing the Aruba Tourism Authority conducted the ceremony which was held at the Divi Village resort. The family loves coming to the island for the great people, family time for adventure and beautiful beaches. □

## Friends sharing love for Aruba



PALM BEACH — Recently, Marouska Heyliger honored Leonard and Jennifer Adams from Connecticut with their Goodwill Ambassadors certificate but also together with their friend Donna Rutledge from Massachusetts with her Distinguished Visitor certificate in the name of the Aruba Tourism Authority. The event which commemorates the Adams 20th and Rutledge 19th consecutive visit to the island was held at Aruba Marriott Courtyard Resort. The friends love coming to the island for its sunny weather, beautiful beaches, friendly people and delicious food. □

## Paradise for Paradise



EAGLE BEACH — Recently, Marouska Heyliger honored Susan Paradice from Massachusetts with her Goodwill Ambassador certificate in the name of the Aruba Tourism Authority. The event which commemorates her 25th consecutive visit to the island was held at Paradise Beach Villas. Paradice loves coming to the island for the casinos, lovely weather and the friends and staff at Paradise Beach Villas. □

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## Dragonfly (Orthemis ferruginea)

Episode XLVII (47)

**ORANJESTAD** — Spirit or ghost of a goat, “Spirit`i Cabrito” in Papiamentu is the way Aruba has named their Libel or Dragonfly. They belong to the order Odonata, a carnivorous insect’s family encompassing the dragonflies and the damselflies. The Odonata form a clade, which has existed since the Permian era. Dragonflies are generally larger, and perch with their wings held out to the sides; damselflies have slender bodies, and hold their wings over the body at rest.

Everything related to dragonflies has always been surrounded by legends and myths. The reality is that they are harmless insects that have lived on earth for 200 million years, before dinosaurs and survived long after their extinction.

Dragonflies consume up to 300 mosquitoes and other flying insects a day, they are sometimes known as mosquito hawks. They are skilled experts, no other animal has the ability to maneuver the dragonfly’s wings, and its wings are bright and beautiful.

While the Maya related them to the sun, other cultures consider them symbols of fertility since females can lay up to 100,000 eggs at once. Males defend territories where the appropriate conditions are found for laying the eggs and where they are developed correctly. Normally, these territories usually coincide with areas that have submerged aquatic vegetation or areas that maintain water levels or currents that allow the oxygenation of the eggs. Territoriality is a behavior that will favor the selection of the most competitive males, which will transmit their genes to the largest possible number of females.

The Odonatas have a mechanism to reduce predation on them like camouflage, since they have colors, design patterns and postures that make predators go unnoticed. When they are attacked, on their hangers during cold mornings when they barely have mobility, they can perform intimidating movements with the legs and abdomen that can deter the predator.

In Mexico as well as in Aruba they are considered as a symbol of water purity, and their presence predicts a good year of harvest. In Tahiti, dragonflies are related to gods and spirits that bring fortune.

In various populations of China, dragonflies symbolize weakness and fragility, but they are also considered beneficial and favorable in rice fields. In addition, they were used to make mixtures with aphrodisiac powers. In Japan they are considered a symbol of victory, happiness, strength and courage. Legend has it that Emperor Yuryako Tenno was hunting on a plain, and a horsefly landed on his arm and stung him. At that moment a dragonfly appeared that got rid of the horsefly.

Continued on Page 15



2- Selective focus photo of gold and black dragonfly on brown stick.



1-Abstract Art by Etnia Nativa - “Spirit di cabrito”



3- Chinese dragonfly drawing



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## Dragonfly (Orthemis ferruginea)

Episode XLVII (47)

Continued from Page 14

In honor of her, the emperor called the area Akitsu-no (plain of the dragonfly) so the ancient name of Japan emerged: Akitsu Shima (The Dragonfly Islands). The samurai, ancient Japanese warriors, use dragonflies as an emblem of good luck, decorating their shields and sabers with them.

In Hindu mythology there is a legend that says that when people die their souls become dragonflies.

In German mythology the dragonflies were associated with Freyja, goddess of love, wealth and eroticism to which they paid tribute on Fridays. But a decree of the Catholic Church of 775 A.D. said: "I relate this goddess to evil and along with it I condemn the dragonflies." From this story in Cantabrian mythology the dragonflies are called "Caballitos del Diablo" who arise on the magical night of San Juan and fly at night in search of the four-leaf clovers they eat to prevent mortals from finding them.

The superstitions of this Cantabrian region say that these horses from hell are men who, because of their sins, lost their soul and were forced to travel Cantabria for the rest of eternity.

In our western world a quite popular legend relates that the dragonflies were Fairies that were forbidden to live with humans and they were not to have any contact with them. Some of these Fairies ignored this prohibition and the gods punished them by converting them in dragonflies.

Time passed and the prohibition of living with humans was abolished but when the pardon reached the fairies that had been turned into dragonflies they refused to return to their previous state because they had already become accustomed to living with humans without hiding flying free on all sides. Here in Aruba dragonflies were considered as healing and transformation animals, shamans called upon in their rituals and as sign of good omen. □



4-Fairies or Dragonflies



## Aruba Living Today celebrates 10 Years of Success: A Different Approach to Real Estate with a Personal Touch



**NOORD — They drive around with you to help you to get to know the island. They arrange your mortgage, insurances, notary and appraisals as they have a Dutch certified appraiser on staff. They assist you in going through the needed bureaucracy during the buying process. They help you with the connection of utilities. They do your property management, vacation rental and help you import your furniture. Everything that comes in with buying a house on the island is within the package they offer. You get the whole nine yard. Who are they? Please meet Aruba Living Today!**

"My goal was to do real estate in a different way when I established this company June 1st 2009. Not from the perspective of only selling, but to look for the perfect match between dream house and client. My philosophy is: it will only work when all involved are happy and connected by that personal touch," says Randolph Arends, owner of Aruba Living Today. Together with his business partner Berend Prenger and a dedicated team they practice what they preach: mediation in Real Estate with a high service level. "I am proud to state that so far all of my clients stayed with us. I am not selling a fairytale, in ten years of course there were challenges too but it is about how you handle those. It's like with family, you stick together with ups and downs. But the love is there."

### All Happens Here


Aruba Living Today is located in an authentic Aruban house, welcoming you in a warm ambiance that emphasizes the philosophy of connecting. There are candles, Buddha ornaments, magazines, and a homey ambiance for you to sit and talk about your dream house or investment. "We are a one stop shopping point. We are not only selling a house, we take all out of your hands. It is a totally different approach that is not pushy, but showing you we do care that you feel at home here on our island. We know the island and its ups and downs. We guide you through the full process in order for you to make a proper decision," says Berend.



### What Do We Do

Services offered by Aruba Living Today are House and Land Sales, Rentals, Investments, Property Management, Vacation Rental, Mortgages, Insurances, Maintenance, Assist in Arrangements for Notary and Utilities, Guiding Bureaucracy Process and Assisting in Import of Furniture. Berend is also a certified appraiser within the Dutch Kingdom meaning he does your appraisal report that is accepted by all banks and he delivers within three days. "Exceptional for Aruba. This definitely speeds up the process of buying," he says. This different approach of real estate is what sets Aruba Living Today apart and is also the reason why Randolph calls himself a property mediator instead of a real estate broker. "The personal touch is essential to me. I am stepping aside of the image that real estate brokers are only in for the commission. This image does not fit me at all, I am in for my passion and I can only do this from the heart."

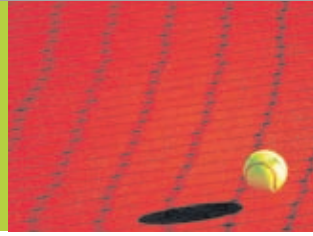
Aruba Living Today caters for both local and foreign market divided into 40% local buyers and 60% foreign buyers. "Our customers come from Holland, Belgium, Norway, Germany, UK, Russia, Latin America, United States and Canada. We are widely covered and thus provable good with different cultures, also we speak four languages." Besides that Aruba Living Today is open to every budget, they have listings for all category buyers. As a member of the Aruban Real Estate Association they are listed also on the website [www.arubalisting.com](http://www.arubalisting.com) within a group of 20 of the most advanced realtors on the island. Aruba Living Today is featured as well on Home & Garden TV and you can find them on House Hunters, Social Media under Aruba Living Today and of course in Aruba Today's newspaper. □



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## SPORTS



## ANALYSIS: RUSSIA SCANDAL MAKES 'FAIR' A THING OF THE PAST

By **EDDIE PELLIS**  
AP National Writer

The goal all along, or so the Olympic leaders say, has been fairness.

And also — that notion of protecting the "innocent" Russian athletes who must be out there somewhere. But what's clear to anyone who has followed even a second of the Russian doping saga, now in its fifth year and showing no signs of ending, "fair" went out the window a while ago. Gone with it are any viable ways of deciphering who's innocent and who's not anymore.

The mission of protecting those stated goals wasn't subverted by the World Anti-Doping Agency's decision Monday to not issue a blanket ban on the Russians for next year's Olympics.

Rather, it died in the summer of 2016, when IOC President Thomas Bach did the same thing before the Rio Olympics.

Back then, Bach introduced the need for a balance between "collective responsibility and individual justice" among the Russians who cheated, organized the cheating or were just caught in the middle of the whole thing.

That turn of phrase is the underpinning of this entire affair, a bumper-sticker slogan that will once again be proved a misleading canard in the aftermath of WADA's latest attempt at punishment.

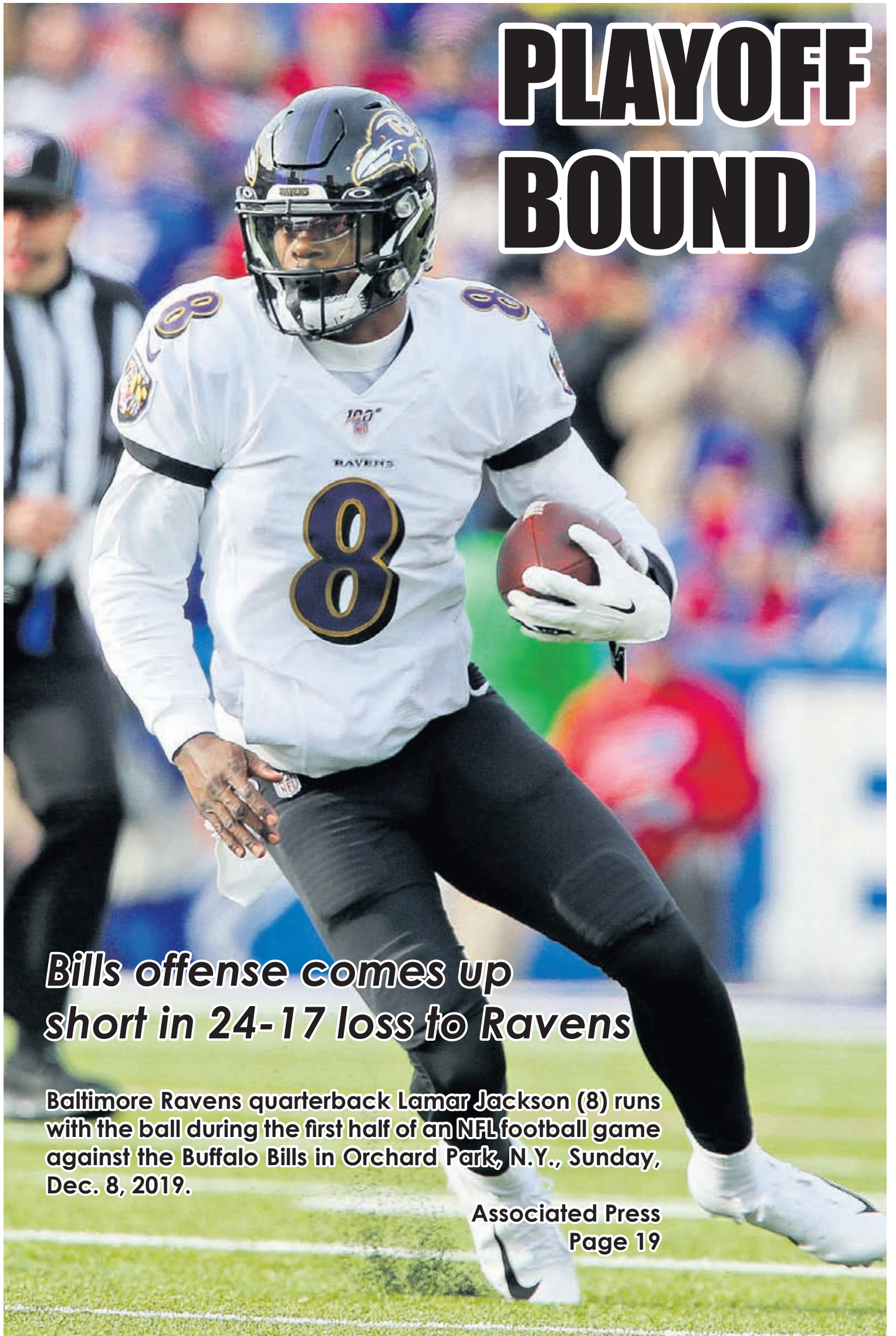
Continued on page 23

# PLAYOFF BOUND

## *Bills offense comes up short in 24-17 loss to Ravens*

**Baltimore Ravens quarterback Lamar Jackson (8) runs with the ball during the first half of an NFL football game against the Buffalo Bills in Orchard Park, N.Y., Sunday, Dec. 8, 2019.**

**Associated Press  
Page 19**





## Crew chief Pearn leaving NASCAR to spend time with family

JENNA FRYER

AP Auto Racing Writer  
CHARLOTTE, N.C. (AP) —

Cole Pearn, considered one of the top crew chiefs in NASCAR, is leaving the sport to spend more time with his family.

Pearn won the 2017 NASCAR championship with Martin Truex Jr. and guided Truex to the title race in four of their five years together, including the last three seasons. Truex was the championship runner-up the last two years, including last month when a rare mistake in the pits cost the No. 19 team a shot at the title.

The team put tires on the wrong side of Truex's car during a routine stop and it put him a lap down — too much to overcome to catch Joe Gibbs Racing teammate Kyle Busch. Truex finished second to Busch in the race, and Busch won the title for Gibbs.

Pearn and Truex joined JGR this year when Furniture Row Racing closed shop in suburban Denver. The move required Pearn, a Canadian, to relocate from Colorado to North Carolina, and he made no secret of the outdoor time and activities he missed with his family.

"At the end of the day, I really want to spend time with my family and actually see my kids grow up," Pearn said Monday. "Being on the road, you are away from home so much and miss a



In this Nov. 17, 2017 file photo Martin Truex Jr., right, smiles with crew chief Cole Pearn before practice for Sunday's NASCAR Cup Series auto race at Homestead-Miami Speedway in Homestead, Fla.

Associated Press

lot of time with your family. I don't want to miss that time anymore. ....I don't want to look back in 20 years and think about everything I missed with my wife and kids while I was gone. They are what is most important to me."

Pearn and Truex had a series-best seven wins this season. In five years together, the duo qualified for the title-deciding finale four times. They won 23 races since the start of 2016, best among all driver-crew chief combos over that time.

"I cannot say enough good things about Cole and what he has meant for my career," Truex said.

"I appreciate his hard work and dedication to our race team over the past six years going back to when he was my engineer at Furniture Row.

Our friendship is what matters most to me and I'm happy that he's doing what's best for him and his family."

Pearn was an anomaly in NASCAR in that he refused to wear a firesuit atop the pit box — he quipped he had no plans to go over the wall and work on the car during a race — and instead donned a team T-shirt or hooded sweatshirt during races. His politics also have a liberal slant and after joining Gibbs this season, he'd occasionally offer an opinion on Twitter that would later be deleted, perhaps because of backlash in the conservative sport. Eventually, he limited his social media to posts about victories or his family. Gibbs did not immediately name a new crew chief for Truex. □



U.S. Megan Rapinoe is seen on the screen after she awarded as the best female soccer player during the Golden Ball award ceremony at the Grand Palais in Paris, Monday, Dec. 2, 2019.

Associated Press

## Rapinoe named Sports Illustrated's Sportsperson of the Year

NEW YORK (AP) — U.S. national team star Megan Rapinoe has been named Sports Illustrated's Sports Illustrated.

Rapinoe, FIFA Player of the Year and a two-time World Cup winner, including this year's tournament in France, was selected for dominating "the world's game, on the world's stage, under attack by a world leader." The magazine says Rapinoe, who is a lesbian, is just the fourth woman in the award's 66-year history to win the honor unaccompanied, calling it "a remarkable athletic achievement and a reflection of entrenched gender biases." Her pose, arms outstretched, chin up, head tilted back slightly after scoring the World Cup winning goal against the Netherlands, represents one of the signature sports images of 2019. Rapinoe

has been an outspoken critic of President Donald Trump, who responded with critical tweets when she said she would not visit the White House if the U.S. women won the trophy. "Rapinoe challenged perceptions of her, of female athletes, of all women. She led her teammates, three months before their tent-pole tournament, to sue the U.S. Soccer Federation for equal pay and to declare in advance that they would not visit the White House when they won the Cup," the magazine said. Rapinoe also won the FIFA Golden Boot and the Golden Ball for most goals and best player, respectively, after the U.S. beat the Netherlands 2-0 in July at the World Cup in France. She also captured the Women's Sports Foundation's Sportswoman of the Year award. □

## UN calls for truce around next year's Tokyo summer Olympics

By EDITH M. LEDERER  
Associated Press

United Nations (AP) — The U.N. General Assembly unanimously approved a resolution Monday urging all nations to observe a truce during the 2020 Summer Olympics in Japan, saying sports can play a role in promoting peace and tolerance and preventing and countering terrorism and violent extremism. Diplomats burst into applause as the assembly president announced the adoption of the resolution by the 193-member world body. The resolution recalls the ancient Greek tradition of "ekecheiria," which called for a cessation of hostilities to encourage a peaceful environment, ensure safe passage and participation

of athletes in the ancient Olympics. The General Assembly revived the tradition in 1993 and has adopted resolutions before all Olympics since then calling for a cessation of hostilities for seven days before and after the games. But member states involved in conflicts have often ignored the call for a truce. Yoshiro Mori, head of the Tokyo organizing committee for the 2020 games, introduced the resolution calling on U.N. members states to observe the truce around next year's Summer Olympics, being held July 24-Aug. 9, and the Paralympics, following on Aug. 25-Sept. 6. The resolution also urges nations to help "use sport as a tool to promote peace, dialogue and reconciliation in areas of conflict during

and beyond" the games. Thomas Bach, president of the International Olympic Committee, told the General Assembly that as the United Nations approaches its 75th anniversary next year, an Olympic year, there is no better time to celebrate the shared values of both organizations to promote peace among all countries and people of the world. Bach said the IOC's political neutrality "is undermined whenever organizations or individuals attempt to use the Olympic Games as a stage for their own agendas — as legitimate as they might be. The Olympics "are a sports celebration of our shared humanity ... and must never be a platform to advance political or any other potentially divisive ends," he said. □



# Chiefs clinch AFC West; Ravens clinch playoffs

By The Associated Press

**BUFFALO, N.Y. (AP)** — Lamar Jackson threw three touchdown passes and the Baltimore Ravens became the AFC's first team to clinch a playoff berth following a 24-17 win over the Buffalo Bills on Sunday.

Baltimore extended its franchise-best winning streak to nine and improved to 11-2, its best record through 13 games in team history.

Jackson finished 16 of 25 for 145 yards and appeared to blow open the game by putting the Ravens up 24-9 following a 4-yard touchdown pass to Willie Snead with 9:49 left.

Buffalo's Josh Allen responded with a seven-play, 78-yard touchdown drive capped by his 3-yard pass to Cole Beasley, who dived inside the left pylon. The same two then hooked up on a 2-point conversion. The outcome wasn't decided until there were 63 seconds remaining. Facing fourth-and-8 at the Baltimore 16, Allen's pass over the middle intended for John Brown was broken up by Marcus Peters at the goal line.

Jackson upped his record to 17-3 since being selected with the final pick of the first round in the 2018 draft. Allen, drafted with the seventh pick overall, dropped to 14-10.

Buffalo (9-4) had a three-game winning streak snapped, and fell short 10 days since grabbing national attention following a 26-15 win at Dallas on Thanksgiving Day.

## **CHIEFS 23, PATRIOTS 16**

**FOXBOROUGH, Mass. (AP)** — Kansas City clinched the AFC West when Bashaud Breeland knocked away Tom Brady's fourth-down pass attempt to Julian Edelman in the end zone.

The Chiefs survived a series of mistakes and questionable calls by the officials to hold off the Patriots. Combined with Oakland's loss to Tennessee, the Chiefs (9-4) took their division. And the loss ended the Patriots' 21-game home win streak in the regular season and playoffs, which was tied for the longest in team history.



**Kansas City Chiefs quarterback Patrick Mahomes grabs the face mask of New England Patriots linebacker Kyle Van Noy, right, as he rolls out to pass in the second half of an NFL football game, Sunday, Dec. 8, 2019, in Foxborough, Mass. Mahomes was penalized on the play.**

Associated Press

It also was the third-longest string in NFL history.

New England (10-3) has lost two in a row.

Patrick Mahomes was 26 of 40 for 283 yards, a touchdown and interception. Travis Kelce added a 10-yard TD run. Brady was under pressure all night and finished 19 of 36 for 169 yards, a touchdown and interception.

Trailing 23-16, New England got the ball back on their 32 with 5:04 to play. The Patriots immediately gained 35 yards on a pass from halfback James White to Jakobi Meyers to get into Kansas City territory. Officials appeared to miss a clear pass interference call on a deep pass to Phillip Dorsett and the Chiefs forced a fourth-and-6 at the 29.

But the 42-year-old Brady got free and scrambled 17 yards for a first down.

The Patriots couldn't get into the end zone, however, losing the rematch of January's AFC title game.

## **49ERS 48, SAINTS 46**

**NEW ORLEANS (AP)** — Jimmy Garoppolo passed for 349 yards and four touchdowns, Robbie Gould kicked a 30-yard field goal as time expired. Garoppolo's clutch completion to tight end George Kittle for a 39-yard gain — plus a defensive facemask penalty — on fourth-and-2 from the San Francisco 33 helped

set up Gould's winning kick. The Saints took their last lead on Drew Brees' fifth touchdown pass of the game — an 18-yarder to Tre'Quan Smith with 53 seconds left. But Brees' pass on an attempted 2-point conversion fell incomplete, leaving New Orleans' lead at one point.

The victory kept San Francisco (11-2) in strong position to capture the top seed in the NFC playoffs. The Niners can clinch a playoff berth if Seattle loses to the Rams in a night game.

Niners receiver Emmanuel Sanders had a 75-yard touchdown and added his second-career touchdown pass after taking a handoff on a reverse.

Two of Garoppolo's touchdown passes went to Kendrick Bourne. Kittle also had a touchdown catch. Sanders finished with seven catches for 157 yards.

Brees finished 29 of 40 for 349 yards and also dived across the goal line for a touchdown. Michael Thomas caught 11 passes for 134 yards and a score, but the Saints, 10-3 and already the NFC South champions, were done in by a few critical failures.

## **RAMS 28, SEAHAWKS 12**

**LOS ANGELES (AP)** — Jared Goff passed for 293 yards and two touchdowns, Todd Gurley ran for 79 yards and a fourth-quarter TD and Los Angeles prevented Seattle

from clinching a playoff berth. Robert Woods and Cooper Kupp caught TD passes while the Rams (8-5) kept their playoff hopes burning and ended the Seahawks' five-game winning streak.

With an aggressive, inventive game plan on both sides of the ball, Los Angeles recaptured a measure of the excitement from its previous two seasons on offense while also playing superb defense against Russell Wilson, who was sacked five times.

The Rams won for the fifth time in seven games, while the Seahawks (10-3) fell out of first place in the NFC West with just their second loss since Sept. 22 and their first road defeat of the season.

Wilson passed for 245 yards amid constant pressure from the Rams. Quandre Diggs returned an interception 55 yards for a touchdown early in the third quarter, but it was the Seahawks' only touchdown. Woods had seven catches for 98 yards and his first touchdown of the season, and tight end Tyler Higbee had seven catches for a career-high 116 yards as the Rams looked like the thrilling offensive unit that dazzled the NFL during coach Sean McVay's first two seasons.

## **TITANS 42, RAIDERS 21**

**OAKLAND, Calif. (AP)** Ryan

Tannehill threw for 391 yards and three touchdowns, Derrick Henry ran for two scores and the Titans won their fourth straight game.

Tennessee broke open a tight game with a three-touchdown barrage in a span of just over seven minutes of the second half that all but ended the playoff hopes for the Raiders (6-7) in their final season in Oakland. Henry, who rushed for 103 yards, broke a 21-21 tie with a 10-yard TD run midway through the third quarter to cap an 89-yard drive. What had been a promising season for the Raiders with a three-game win streak in November that improved them to 6-4 has gone off the rails the past three weeks. They lost by 31 points in successive road games against the Jets and Chiefs and then fell apart in the second half against Tennessee.

## **STEELERS 23, CARDINALS 17**

**GLENDALE, Ariz. (AP)** — Diontae Johnson returned a punt 85 yards for a touchdown and caught a pass for another score.

Pittsburgh's defense had three crucial interceptions in the second half — two by Joe Haden and another by T.J. Watt — to end Arizona drives, including two that had ventured into Steelers' territory.

Pittsburgh (8-5) won for the seventh time in eight games to stay in the AFC playoff race. Rookie free agent quarterback Devlin Hodges made his third career start, completing 16 of 19 passes for 152 yards and a touchdown.

Hodges didn't need to make many tough throws but came through with a good one in the third quarter, hitting Johnson in the front corner of the end zone for a 2-yard touchdown that gave the Steelers a 20-10 lead.

Hodges also finished with 34 yards rushing.

Arizona's Kyler Murray completed 20 of 30 passes for 194 yards and two touchdowns, but his three interceptions were very costly. The Cardinals (3-9-1) lost their sixth consecutive game. □



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Captain Herby would catch the fish to be served at the restaurant the same day. That concept still lives, what is 'hooked' during the day is cooked in the evening at the restaurant.

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## Scheifele leads Jets to 3-2 win over Ducks

**By The Associated Press**  
**WINNIPEG, Manitoba (AP)**

— Mark Scheifele scored twice, the second on a power play with 4:22 left for his 400th NHL point, in the Winnipeg Jets' 3-2 victory over the Anaheim Ducks on Sunday.

Scheifele beat goalie John Gibson over the glove for his 13th of the season.

Adam Lowry also scored, Mathieu Perrault had two assists and Connor Hellebuyck made 31 saves. Winnipeg is 5-1-1 in its past seven games.

Jakob Silfverberg scored his team-leading 11th goal for the Ducks. Devin Shore had his first of the season and John Gibson made 30 saves. Anaheim is 1-3-1 in its last five games.

**COYOTES 4, BLACKHAWKS 3, SO**

CHICAGO (AP) — Conor Garland and Nick Schmaltz scored in the shootout against Robin Lehner, and Arizona rallied from two

goals down to beat Chicago.

Patrick Kane connected against Darcy Kuemper in the tiebreaker as the Coyotes improved to 5-2 in shootouts this season and finished a 3-1 road trip.

Garland got his team-leading 12th goal in regulation, and Carl Soderberg and Christian Fischer also scored. Kuemper finished with 26 saves through overtime. Jonathan Toews has a goal and two assists for his first three-point game this season. Alex DeBrincat and Dominik Kubalik also scored for injury-depleted Chicago, which played beyond regulation for the third straight game following an overtime win at Boston on Thursday and a shootout win at New Jersey the following night.

Lehner had 44 saves — including several sensational ones — as the Coyotes pressured late.

**SABRES 3, OILERS 2, OT**



Winnipeg Jets' Mark Scheifele (55) scores on Anaheim Ducks goaltender John Gibson (36) during the first period of an NHL hockey game, Sunday, Dec. 8, 2019 in Winnipeg, Manitoba.

Associated Press

EDMONTON, Alberta (AP) — Colin Miller scored 1:13 into overtime to end Buffalo's two-game skid.

Kyle Okposo and Johan Larsson also scored for the Sabres, and Linus Ullmark stopped 26 shots.

Riley Sheahan and Joakim

Nygaard scored for the Oilers, who have lost four of their last six games. Mike Smith finished with 19 saves. In the extra period, Miller took a feed through the crease from Marcus Johansson to score the winner. Jack Eichel picked up

an assist on the play to extend his point streak to 13 games.

**PANTHERS 5, SHARKS 1**

SUNRISE, Fla. (AP) — Sergei Bobrovsky stopped 30 shots to win for the second straight night as Florida beat San Jose.

Aleksander Barkov, Keith Yandle and Frank Vatrano each had a goal and an assist, and Mike Matheson and Brett Connolly also scored to help Florida win for the third time in four games. Aaron Ekblad and Jonathan Huberdeau each had two assists.

Bobrovsky, coming off a 33-save performance in win over Columbus — his former team — on Saturday night, improved to 11-6-4. Kevin Labanc scored and Martin Jones had 28 saves for the Sharks, who lost their fourth straight (0-3-1).

**RANGERS 5, GOLDEN KNIGHTS 0**

LAS VEGAS (AP) — Alexander Georgiev stopped 38 shots for his second shut-out of the season and New York beat Vegas. □



## Davis scores 50 as NBA-leading Lakers beat T-Wolves 142-125

By The Associated Press

**LOS ANGELES (AP)** — Anthony Davis had a season-high 50 points and the Los Angeles Lakers improved to a league-best 21-3 with a 142-125 win over the Minnesota Timberwolves on Sunday night.

Davis hit a floater with 4:39 remaining to reach 50 points for the fourth time in his career. He was 20 of 29 from the field and made all 10 of his free throws to go along with seven rebounds and six assists.

LeBron James had 32 points and 13 assists despite committing four fouls in the first half. Alex Caruso added 16 points as the Lakers won their fourth straight and improved to 10-2 at home.

Each of the Timberwolves' starters had at least 12 points.

Karl-Anthony Towns and Andrew Wiggins each had 19 points as Minnesota lost its fourth straight game.

Davis had 42 points through three quarters, one more than his previous single-game best this season, 41 points in his return to New Orleans on Nov. 27.

### HEAT 110, BULLS 105

**MIAMI (AP)** — Tyler Herro scored 27 points, including a go-ahead 3-pointer with 38.2 seconds left in overtime, and Miami held off Chicago to improve to 10-0 at home this season.

Herro made three 3's in overtime and another with 7.1 seconds left in regulation just to help the Heat get into the extra session. His last 3-pointer gave Miami a three-point lead.

Jimmy Butler scored 23 points for the Heat, going 17 for 21 from the foul line. Bam Adebayo had 21 points, 13 rebounds and six assists for Miami, which also got 18 from Kendrick Nunn. Lauri Markkanen had 13 of his team-high 22 points in the third quarter for the Bulls, who got 18 from Zach LaVine and 16 from Kris Dunn. Markkanen missed a potentially game-tying corner 3-pointer with about 1.5 seconds left in overtime.

### 76ERS 110, RAPTORS 104

**PHILADELPHIA (AP)** — Tobias Harris scored 26 points and rookie Matisse Thy-

bulle had a career-high 20 points, including a pair of free throws with 23 seconds left, to lead Philadelphia past Toronto for its 12th straight home win.

Ben Simmons had 16 points, 11 rebounds and nine assists as the Sixers remained unbeaten at home this season.

Kyle Lowry, playing in his second game after missing 11 in a row due to a broken left thumb, scored 26 points, and OG Anunoby had 19 points and 10 rebounds for Toronto. The defending champion Raptors have lost three in a row.

Joel Embiid returned from a one-game absence due to a hip injury, finishing with 10 points and eight rebounds. Embiid was benched with 2:08 remaining after committing turnovers on three straight possessions that turned a seemingly easy victory into a tight one. He had seven of Philadelphia's 17 turnovers.

The Raptors, who trailed by as many as 20 points in the third quarter, got as close as five before Thybulle's two free throws with 26.3 seconds left sealed the deal.

### CLIPPERS 135, WIZARDS 119

**WASHINGTON (AP)** — Kawhi Leonard had 34 points and 11 rebounds and Los Angeles bounced back from its worst loss of the season with a win over Washington.

Paul George scored 27 points and Montrezl Harrell had nine of his 20 in the fourth quarter for the Clippers, who improved to 4-6 away from home two games into their six-game trip.

The victory came two days after Los Angeles opened the trip with a 119-91 loss at Eastern Conference-leading Milwaukee.

Washington's bench kept the game competitive for more than three quarters. Davis Bertans tied his season-high with 25 points, including six 3-pointers. Troy Brown Jr. scored a career-high 20 points.

Bradley Beal's 20 points were the most by a Washington starter and came off a difficult 5-for-18 shooting night.



Los Angeles Lakers' Anthony Davis (3) shoots against Minnesota Timberwolves' Jordan Bell (7) during the first half of an NBA basketball game, Sunday, Dec. 8, 2019, in Los Angeles.

Associated Press

### HAWKS 122, HORNETS 107

**CHARLOTTE, N.C. (AP)** — Trae Young had 30 points and nine assists and the Atlanta beat Charlotte for its second win in 13 games.

Jabari Parker added 19 points and Vince Carter had 17 off the bench on 7-of-9 shooting to help the Hawks improve to 6-17.

Young had 20 points in the second half, including 14 in the decisive fourth quarter in which the Hawks blew open the game.

Miles Bridges and P.J. Washington each had 20 points to lead the Hornets. They have lost three of four on a five-game homestand. Washington left the game midway through the fourth quarter after rolling his right ankle on a drive.

Atlanta's Alex Len finished with 13 points and 10 rebounds and played a big role in helping turn the tide of the game in the third quarter.

### NETS 105, NUGGETS 102

**NEW YORK (AP)** — Spencer Dinwiddie scored 24 points

and Brooklyn held off Denver for its third straight victory.

Denver had a chance to force overtime, but Jamal Murray missed a 3-pointer from the wing as time expired.

Jarrett Allen added 19 points and 11 rebounds for Brooklyn. Star guard Kyrie Irving missed his 12th straight game because of a right shoulder impingement.

Nikola Jokic had 24 points and 11 rebounds for Denver, and Murray scored 21 points. The Nuggets have lost two straight.

### KINGS 110, MAVERICKS 106

**DALLAS (AP)** — Nemanja Bjelica matched his career best with 30 points and Luka Doncic missed a game-tying attempt in the final seconds as Sacramento withstood a furious rally and beat Dallas.

Buddy Hield scored 26 points, including five 3-pointers, for Sacramento. Former Maverick Harrison Barnes scored 12, Richaun Holmes added 12 and Bog-

dan Bogdanovic and Trevor Ariza 10 each.

Doncic finished with 27 points, including 17 in the second half. The Mavericks' high scorer was Tim Hardaway Jr. with 29 points. He kept the Mavs in the game by making a career-high nine of 12 3-pointers.

For Dallas, Dorian Finney-Smith and Kristaps Porzingis each had 13 points.

### THUNDER 108, TRAIL BLAZERS 96

**PORTLAND, Ore. (AP)** — Dennis Schroder and Shai Gilgeous-Alexander each scored 21 points and Oklahoma City opened a four-game trip with a win over Portland.

The Thunder, who led by as many as 18 points in the first half, have won four of their last five games, the team's best stretch of the season. Chris Paul finished with 20 points.

Damian Lillard had 26 for the Blazers, who have lost three of four. Carmelo Anthony finished with nine points on 4-for-18 shooting. □



## AP source: Strasburg, Nats reach record \$245M, 7-year deal

By RONALD BLUM  
AP Baseball Writer

**SAN DIEGO (AP)** — Stephen Strasburg is returning to Washington with a record contract, and fellow free agent pitcher Gerrit Cole could be in line for an even larger payday. Strasburg and the Nationals agreed to a \$245 million, seven-year contract, a person familiar with the negotiations told The Associated Press on Monday. The person spoke on condition of anonymity at baseball's annual winter meetings because the agreement had not been announced. A 31-year-old right-hander,



In this Nov. 2, 2019, file photo, Washington Nationals pitcher and World Series MVP Stephen Strasburg, center, celebrates the World Series baseball championship during a rally following a parade to celebrate the team's World Series baseball championship over Houston Astros, in Washington.

Associated Press

## Zack Wheeler, Phillies finalize \$118M, 5-year contract



In this Sept. 15, 2019, file photo, New York Mets starting pitcher Zack Wheeler (45) winds up during the first inning of a baseball game against the Los Angeles Dodgers, in New York.

Associated Press

**SAN DIEGO (AP)** — The Philadelphia Phillies and right-hander Zack Wheeler finalized their \$118 million, five-year contract Monday. Wheeler agreed to the deal last Thursday subject to a successful physical. The 29-year-old stays in the NL East after spending his first seven seasons with the New York Mets. He was 11-8 with a 3.96 ERA last season after going 12-7 with a 3.31 ERA in 2018. Wheeler missed the 2015 and 2016 seasons following Tommy John surgery. He joins a rotation led by Aaron Nola that also in-

cludes Jake Arrieta. The Phillies may pursue another front-line starter — longtime NL East foe Stephen Strasburg, perhaps — to join a staff that has Zach Eflin, Vince Velasquez and Nick Pivetta. Philadelphia spent big money last season on free-agent outfielders Bryce Harper and Andrew McCutchen and acquired catcher J.T. Realmuto and shortstop Jean Segura in trades. The Phillies didn't address starting pitching, and the staff's struggles cost them in the second half as they

faded to an 81-81 finish. Manager Gabe Kapler was fired and replaced by Joe Girardi. Wheeler is 44-38 with a 3.77 ERA in 126 starts. He has 726 strikeouts in 749 1/3 innings. Because Wheeler turned down the Mets' \$17.8 million qualifying offer, Philadelphia forfeits its second-highest draft pick next June, which had been No. 53 overall, and \$500,000 of international signing bonus allocation for 2020-21. The Mets gain an extra pick ahead of the third round, currently No. 74 overall. □

Strasburg agreed to a deal that is the highest for a pitcher in both total dollars and average annual value at \$35 million. The largest contract for a pitcher had been David Price's \$217 million, seven-year deal with Boston that began in 2016. The highest average value had been Zack Greinke's \$34.4 million as part of a \$206.5 million, six-year agreement with Arizona prior to the 2016 season. Strasburg's deal includes \$80 million in deferred payments, with all the money paid by 2029, the person said. The contract sets a floor for Cole, who is expected to top the records Strasburg just set.

Cole, whose Astros lost to the Nationals in a seven-game World Series, is two years younger and has been healthier throughout his career. Like Strasburg, he's represented by agent Scott Boras. Strasburg was drafted first overall by Washington in 2009 and has spent his entire career with the Nationals. He'll stay in a rotation that also features All-Stars Max Scherzer and Patrick Corbin. After helping win the first World Series title in the 51-season history of the Montreal/Washington franchise, Strasburg gave up \$100 million he had been guaranteed from 2020-23

as part of a \$175 million, seven-year contract he agreed to in May 2016 and became a free agent. He was 18-6 with a 3.32 ERA this season, topping 30 starts for the second time in his career and leading the NL with 209 innings. He went 5-0 with a 1.98 ERA in five postseason starts and one relief appearance, including wins in Games 2 and 6 of the World Series against Houston. In a career interrupted by Tommy John surgery shortly after his spectacular major league debut in 2010, Strasburg is 112-58 with a 3.17 ERA and 1,695 strikeouts in parts of 10 seasons. He's made 10 trips to the disabled list over seven of those years. Strasburg's average annual value is second among all players behind outfielder Mike Trout's \$35.5 million in a \$426.5 million, 12-year contract with the Los Angeles Angels that started last season. Washington has invested heavily in starting pitching. Scherzer, also a Boras client, agreed to a \$210 million, seven-year contract before the 2015 season. Corbin reached a \$140 million, six-year deal last off-season. All-Star third baseman Anthony Rendon, another key component of the Nationals' title, also is a free agent represented by Boras. □



## 'FAIR'

Continued from Page 17

WADA, nothing more than a rubber-stamp extension of Bach's IOC since his 2016 declaration, approved sanctions Monday that it insisted showed its "determination to act resolutely in the face of the Russian doping" — specifically, proof that Russia tampered with data it was supposed to hand over to prosecute athletes caught in the doping scheme.

Without the full-blanket ban, however, all it is talk. In the spirit of fairness, or so WADA reasoned, "innocent" Russian athletes should not be penalized for the actions of their country's most sinister doping plotters.

Sounds fair, on paper. But in reality, it's (more of) a disaster in the making.

Part of WADA's reasoning for not instituting the blanket ban was to give a chance for "innocent" Russians to compete provided, among other caveats, that "there are no positive findings reported for them in the database and no data relating to their samples has been manipulated."

But according to WADA's own investigation, there are 145 cases in the database — handed over a

few years ago by a whistleblower — that have been manipulated or deleted.

Just imagine how busy the Court of Arbitration for Sport — another bought-and-paid-for offshoot of the IOC — will be in handling appeals from Russians whose names are among those 145. Those athletes will find themselves involved in cases that tampering, according to WADA's own investigators, has "materially prejudiced (authorities') ability to pursue." WADA's inability to back up these cases, thanks to some malicious handiwork by agents of the Russian government who were destroying the data, will weaken, if not outright obliterate, the case for any sanctions against these athletes.

"In part, it's why they needed to put a full-blanket suspension on," said Travis Tygart of the U.S. Anti-Doping Agency. "At the beginning, some people could understand not doing that. But this is the third Olympic Games that this is happening."

All of which leads to the ultimate body blow to fairness: No matter how clean, how stringently vetted, how seemingly "innocent" they are, no Russian who is



President-Elect of World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) Witold Banka, left, President of World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) Craig Reedie, right, and Director General of World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) Olivier Niggli, center, arrive for a press conference after the WADA's extraordinary Executive Committee (ExCo) on the Russian doping data manipulation, in Lausanne, Switzerland, Monday, Dec. 9, 2019.

returning to the world stage after the scandal can really be trusted. That's not fair to those who should be trusted, it's not fair to Russians who had nothing to do with 2014, and it's certainly not fair to the clean athletes from other countries who will wonder if the Russian next to them is doing things the right way or is simply another pawn in that country's wide-ranging conspiracy.

"Russia dug its own grave and has ruined the chances for any clean Russian

athlete to compete," said Jim Walden, the attorney for Grigory Rodchenkov, the former Moscow lab director who blew the whistle on the Russian scheme and is now in hiding in America. "If the files were deleted, how can any athlete credibly prove (his or her) innocence?"

There could be reasons beyond simple "fairness" and the quest to protect the innocent that might explain the mission to keep Russian in the Olympic circle. Why are Bach and the IOC and,

by extension, WADA so beholden to a country that cheats so much? Is it the \$50 billion-plus Russia spent to host the Sochi Games? It's a topic worth pursuing. But for now, let's just take the leaders at their word.

"While being tough on the authorities, this recommendation avoids punishing the innocent and instead stands up for the rights of clean athletes everywhere," said Jonathan Taylor, the chair of WADA's compliance review committee. □

## Joshua set to defend heavyweight titles at Tottenham stadium

By STEVE DOUGLAS  
AP Sports Writer

RIYADH, Saudi Arabia (AP)

— Anthony Joshua is set for a London homecoming to start his second reign as world heavyweight champion, with his next fight likely to take place at the recently built stadium of Premier League soccer club Tottenham.

Joshua reclaimed his WBA, WBO and IBF titles early Sunday with a unanimous points decision over Andy Ruiz Jr. in Saudi Arabia, having lost to the Mexican-American in New York in June for the first defeat of his career.

They were the Briton's first two overseas bouts, with Joshua earning a reported \$70 million for fighting in



Britain's Anthony Joshua celebrates after beating Andy Ruiz Jr. to win their World Heavyweight Championship contest at the Diriyah Arena, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

Associated Press

Saudi Arabia, but Joshua wants to defend his titles in front of his home fans.

"London's calling, I think,"

said Joshua, who was born in Watford just outside the capital.

"British supporters do play

a big part in my career. Any time I'm on home soil, I can't lose." Joshua, who won the Olympic gold medal at the London Games in 2012, has fought twice at the 90,000-capacity Wembley Stadium, beating Wladimir Klitschko and Alexander Povetkin. But Eddie Hearn, Joshua's promoter, says the national soccer stadium "doesn't look great, date-wise" for Joshua's next fight, which is set to be in April or May against IBF mandatory contender Kubrat Pulev. Hearn has turned his sights on the Tottenham Hotspur Stadium, which was opened in April and has a 60,000 capacity.

"The phone has gone crazy — it's like, 'Bring him

here, bring him here,'" Hearn said, sitting alongside Joshua in a restaurant on one of the top floors of a 5-star hotel in Riyadh. "They've seen what we've done here and there's a lot of options internationally, but he does want to box back in the UK."

"We spoke to Spurs about hosting this fight (the rematch against Ruiz), which they were keen to do, but unfortunately the dates didn't work out. They would be keen to do it and it would be a nice stadium to do it in London."

Hearn said the UK pay-per-view numbers for the Ruiz-Joshua rematch were "well over a million," which would break the UK record. □



# Amazon says Trump's 'improper pressure' doomed Pentagon bid

By **MATT O'BRIEN** and **JOSEPH PISANI**

Amazon says President Donald Trump's "improper pressure" and behind-the-scenes attacks harmed its chances of winning a \$10 billion Pentagon contract. The Pentagon awarded the cloud computing contract to Microsoft in October.

Amazon argues in a lawsuit unsealed Monday in the U.S. Court of Federal Claims that the decision should be revisited because of "substantial and pervasive errors" and Trump's interference.

Amazon and its founder Jeff Bezos are a frequent target of Trump. Bezos personally owns The Washington Post, which Trump has referred to as "fake news" whenever unfavorable stories are published about him.

Amazon said it lost the deal due to Trump's "personal vendetta against Mr. Bezos, Amazon, and the Washington Post."



**In this Feb. 14, 2019, file photo people stand in the lobby for Amazon offices in New York. Amazon says President Donald Trump's "improper pressure" and behind-the-scenes attacks harmed its chances of winning a \$10 billion Pentagon contract.**

Pentagon spokeswoman Elissa Smith said in a statement Monday the decision to select Microsoft "was made by an expert team of career public servants and military officers" and without external influence. Formally called the Joint

Enterprise Defense Infrastructure plan, or JEDI, the military's computing project would store and process vast amounts of classified data. The Defense Department has said it will help speed up its war planning and fighting capabili-

**Associated Press** ties and enable the military to advance its use of artificial intelligence.

Amazon and Microsoft became the finalists after Oracle and IBM were eliminated in an earlier round of the contract competition. Oracle had also sued, arguing the bidding was rigged in Amazon's favor. Trump publicly waded into the bidding process over the summer, saying he heard complaints and wanted the Pentagon to take a closer look.

"The department is confident in the JEDI award and remains focused on getting this critical capability into the hands of our warfighters as quickly and efficiently as possible," Smith said.

The White House didn't return an emailed request for comment Monday.

Microsoft said in a statement it has "confidence in the qualified staff at the Department of Defense, and we believe the facts will show they ran a detailed, thorough and fair process."

Charles Tiefer, a government contracting law professor at the University of Baltimore, said it would be "an uphill battle" for Amazon to win the lawsuit.

The company must prove real influence by the president beyond his tweets and campaign speeches. Emails and other documents would have to prove

that Trump's views toward Amazon were on the mind of officials in charge of awarding the contract.

"That's hard to show," Tiefer said. "But it's not impossible."

Amazon makes the case in the lawsuit that its cloud services were a better fit for the project because of its speed, efficiency and experience securely handling classified government data. It says the Defense Department made errors in the procurement process that make little sense without taking into account Trump's antipathy toward Amazon. Some of the lawsuit's details are redacted for proprietary or security reasons. "Basic justice requires reevaluation of proposals and a new award decision," the lawsuit says. "The stakes are high. The question is whether the President of the United States should be allowed to use the budget of DoD to pursue his own personal and political ends."

Amazon Web Services has been the industry leader in moving businesses and other institutions onto its cloud — a term used to describe banks of servers in remote data centers that can be accessed from almost anywhere. But Microsoft's Azure cloud platform has been steadily catching up, as have other providers such as Google, in both corporate and government settings.

Mike Hettinger, a tech industry lobbyist focused on federal contracting, said a strong case could have been made for either Amazon or Microsoft winning the contract but it is hard for an outside observer to know what went into the government's technical evaluations and whether Trump's comments or actions influenced the outcome. Amazon is likely to use the case to seek more internal documents from the government.

"I don't think anybody knows what happened behind the scenes," Hettinger said. "I think that's what this lawsuit is intended to find out." □

## George Laurer, inventor of ubiquitous UPC, dies at 94

**WENDELL, N.C. (AP)** — George J. Laurer, whose invention of the Universal Product Code at IBM transformed retail and other industries around the world, has died. He was 94.

A funeral was held on Monday for Laurer, who died Thursday at his home in Wendell, North Carolina, a suburb of Raleigh. Sean Bannon with Strickland Funeral Home in Wendell said he had no information on Laurer's cause of death.

Laurer was an electrical engineer with IBM in North Carolina's Research Triangle Park in the early 1970s when he spearheaded the development of the UPC, or bar code.

The now-ubiquitous marking, composed of unique black bars and a 12-digit number, allowed retailers to identify products and their prices as they



**In this Sept. 24, 2015, file photo, tags with bar codes hang at a facility in Flandreau, S.D.**

**Associated Press**

are scanned, usually at checkout.

Laurer said in a 2010 interview that grocery stores in the 1970s were dealing with soaring costs and the labor-intensive requirements of putting price tags on all of their products. The bar code led to fewer pricing errors and allowed retailers to keep better account of their inventory.

Today, such UPCs are on

all kinds of products, services and other items for identification.

"To me, it's just absolutely amazing, because when we were doing this ... I never expected it to be anything like this," Laurer told WRAL-TV in 2010. He later produced a patent for one of the first handheld scanners for reading bar codes, according to an obituary provided by the funeral home. □





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## Stocks are mostly lower on Wall Street with trade in focus

By **DAMIAN J. TROISE**  
**Associated Press**

**NEW YORK (AP)** — U.S. stocks are mostly lower in afternoon trading Monday as investors waited for the latest updates about trade negotiations and the economy.

Wall Street is particularly focused on developments in the trade war ahead of a new round of tariffs on \$160 billion of Chinese imports due to take effect on Sunday.

That would raise prices on key products, including cell phones and laptops, and threaten to affect consumers.

A Chinese official said Monday that the nation wants a prompt settlement, but gave no details on progress toward a potential deal. China made a conciliatory gesture last week when it said it would waive tariffs on American soybeans and pork.

Gains from communications companies were



In this Dec. 5, 2019, file photo trader James MacGilvray works on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange.

offset by losses from technology stocks. Twitter rose 1.2% and Apple fell 1.7%. The yield on the 10-year Treasury fell to 1.82% from 1.84% late Friday, though banks held steady.

**KEEPING SCORE:** The S&P 500 index fell 0.1% as of 11:55 a.m. Eastern time. The Dow Jones Industrial Average fell 74 points, or 0.3%, to 27,940. The Nasdaq fell 0.1%. The Russell 2000 index

of smaller company stocks was unchanged. European markets edged lower and Asian markets rose.

**BIG PHARMA GOES SHOPPING:** Several old-guard

drug developers made billion-dollar purchases to beef up their development of potential cancer treatments.

Merck is spending \$2.7 billion for ArQule, a small biotechnology company that is still in the earlier stages of studying potential treatments for conditions including leukemia. ArQule's stock doubled following the announcement and Merck fell slightly.

Sanofi is making a similar play, spending \$2.5 billion for Synthorx, which is also in the earlier stages of testing treatments. Sanofi slipped 1.7% and Synthorx more than doubled.

**DISCOUNT DRUGS:** Health insurer United HealthCare is buying Diplomat Pharmacy to help bolster its pharmacy benefits unit, OptimRx. The deal is being made at a steep discount, which sent Diplomat's stock plunging 31.9%, while UnitedHealth barely budged. □

**Associated Press**

## Business economists see US slowing but avoiding recession

Paul Wiseman  
**Associated Press**

**Washington (AP)** — The nation's business economists expect U.S. economic growth to decelerate this year and next but for the economy to avoid stumbling into recession, extending a record-breaking

expansion already in its 11th year. The latest survey by 53 forecasters with the National Association for Business Economics shows that they expect economic growth to slow from 2.9% last year to 2.3% in 2019 and 1.8% in 2020. The forecasts are unchanged from

the association's previous survey in October.

The economists put the odds of a recession starting at 5% this year, 21% in the first half of 2020 and 43% by the end of next year.

However, they peg the odds of a recession by mid-2021 at 66%. □

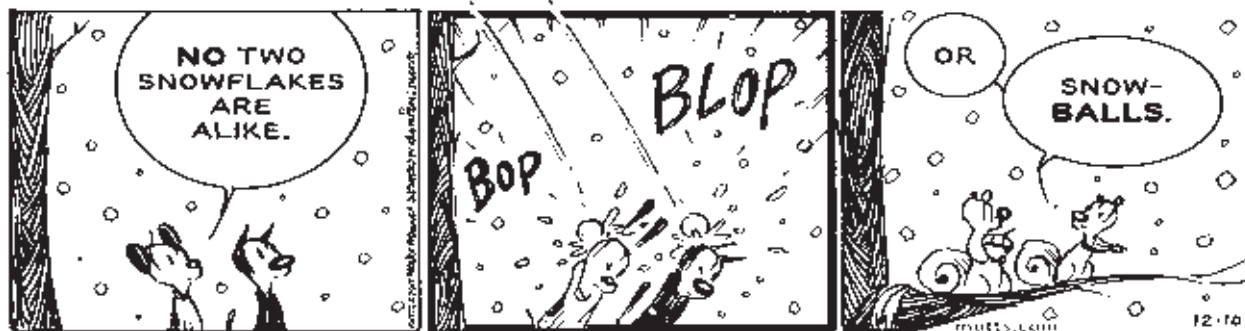


In this March 8, 2019, file photo, work continues on an outdoor observation deck on the 30 Hudson Yards office building in New York.

**Associated Press**



**Mutts**



**6 Chix**



**Blondie**



**Mother Goose & Grimm**



**Baby Blues**



**Zits**



**Conceptis Sudoku**

2		9						
1	3	7					9	6
	8		6			5	7	
							1	
1	2					8		9
7								
8	4		7		1			
7	6				2	4	5	
			1				8	

Difficulty Level ★★

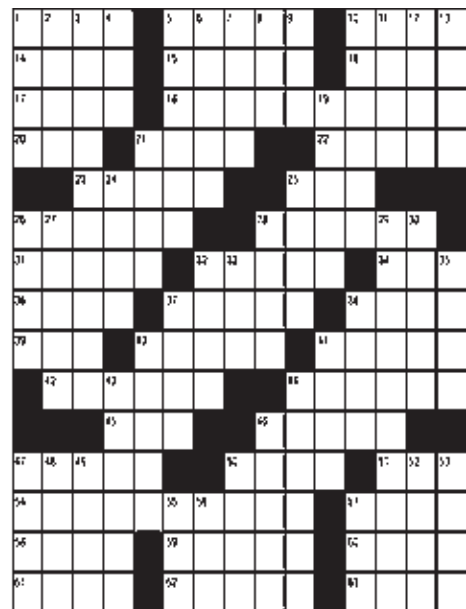
Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Sunday.

Yesterday's puzzle answer

7	4	9	2	8	6	3	1	5
3	5	8	9	1	4	6	7	2
2	6	1	5	7	3	9	4	8
9	1	3	7	4	5	8	2	6
6	7	4	8	9	2	1	5	3
5	8	2	3	6	1	4	9	7
1	9	7	6	5	8	2	3	4
4	2	6	1	3	7	5	8	9
8	3	5	4	2	9	7	6	1

- ACROSS**
- 1 No longer wild
  - 5 Bunches of hay
  - 10 Fragile edibles
  - 14 Become dizzy
  - 15 ... a dream ... (MLK)
  - 16 Weezer or Wyle
  - 17 Maria ... karate, judo, etc.
  - 18 Behead
  - 20 Taro root paste
  - 21 June 6, 1944
  - 22 Troop the cadence of
  - 23 Healed
  - 25 Simple card game
  - 26 Poor person
  - 28 Linear measures
  - 31 Give permission to
  - 32 Layered rock
  - 34 Have a meal
  - 36 Lunchtime
  - 37 Brief period of time
  - 38 Sandwich snack
  - 39 Widebeast
  - 40 Overzealous, condescending
  - 41 Frazer or A
  - 42 Bodyguard's g
  - 44 Polite person's word
  - 45 Hit a tennis ball high
  - 48 Deep cliff, gorge
  - 47 Loyalists & others
  - 50 Dash of liquid
  - 51 ... a Greek to me!
  - 54 Little fish, fellow
  - 57 Ginger cookie
  - 58 Pacific Coast state, abbr.
  - 59 Fraction of a pound
  - 60 Frau's husband
  - 61 Actor Danza
  - 62 Writing tables
  - 63 Catch a glimpse of

- DOWN**
- 1 Ensnare
  - 2 Prefix for plane or space
  - 3 Fastidious
  - 4 Emie with a clut
  - 5 Auction participant
  - 6 In the ead so far
  - 7 Like a marlin
  - 8 Zsa Zsa's sis
  - 9 Ninth month, abbr.
  - 10 Complete
  - 11 Intention
  - 12 CA's Golden Bridge
  - 13 Sma' outbuilding
  - 19 Fuming
  - 21 Carey or Barrymore
  - 24 Come ... find
  - 25 Water source
  - 26 Hunger can
  - 27 Without companions
  - 28 Guy
  - 29 Looks over again
  - 30 Business deal's
  - 32 Squabble
  - 33 For a o'y, good fellow...
  - 35 Flat ... corner's woe
  - 37 One from Belgrade
  - 38 Forest lommies
  - 40 ... change, pocket coins
  - 41 Spill the beans
  - 43 Press rabbits & others
  - 44 T-Mobile store purchases
  - 46 Pen's comment
  - 47 ... machine
  - 48 Submarine casino attraction
  - 49 ... house
  - 50 Forbids
  - 52 Waterproof covering
  - 53 Light on one's feet
  - 54 MA's Cape
  - 56 Pair's selection
  - 57 That wayran



Created by Jacqueline E. Matthews

Monday's Puzzle Solved

CRIB	SCAT	CLOD
LUNAR	LAIR	HONE
AT THE	ALLOWANCE	
PSI	POP	MANGER
MOANS	BIG	
TRIVIA	JOSEPH	
RIDER	BLUNT	TRUN
ASAN	BRIDE	DOME
PET	GLADE	SOFAS
REARED	ANOINT	
MIS	SPORT	
MASONS	FEER	ADO
INAUDIBLE	EBBED	
CORN	HOOK	SALAD
EXIT	GAGS	REDS

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# Brain differences may be tied to obesity, kids' study says

By **LINDSEY TANNER**  
AP Medical Writer

New results from the largest long-term study of brain development and children's health raise provocative questions about obesity and brain function. Does excess body weight somehow reduce brain regions that regulate planning and impulse control? Is obesity a result of that brain difference? Or are eating habits, lifestyle, family circumstances and genetics to blame?

Previous studies in children and adults have had conflicting results. The new research doesn't settle the matter and outside experts cautioned that misinterpreting it could unfairly perpetuate weight stigma. But an editorial published with the study Monday in JAMA Pediatrics called it an important addition to mounting evidence of a link between weight, brain structure and mental function.

If follow-up research confirms the findings, it could lead to new ways to prevent obesity that target improved brain function.

"We don't know which direction these relationships go nor do they suggest that people with obesity are not as smart as people at a healthy weight," said Dr. Eliana Perrin, a Duke University pediatrics professor who co-wrote the editorial.

The federally-funded study involved 3,190 U.S. children aged 9 and 10. They had height and weight measurements, MRI brain scans and computer-based tests of mental function including memory, language, reasoning and impulse control. Nearly 1,000 kids — almost 1 in 3 — were overweight or obese, similar to



In this July 23, 2009 file photo, children are silhouetted by the setting sun as they ride a swing ride during the Canyon County Fair in Caldwell, Idaho.

Associated Press

national statistics. Researchers found differences in the heaviest children's brain scans, slightly less volume in the brain region behind the forehead that controls what are known as "executive function" tasks. They include things like ability to plan, control impulses and

handle multiple tasks simultaneously.

The differences compared with normal-weight kids were subtle, said study author Scott Mackey, a neuroscientist at the University of Vermont.

The heaviest kids also had slightly worse scores on computer-based tests of

executive function. But Mackey and lead author Jennifer Laurent, a University of Vermont obesity researcher, said it's unknown whether any of the differences had any meaningful effect on children's academic functioning or behavior. It's unclear exactly how they are related to

weight and Mackey said it's likely other factors not measured in the study including physical activity and healthy nutrition play a far greater role.

Research in adults has linked obesity with low-level inflammation throughout the body that can damage blood vessels and may increase risks for heart disease and mental decline. Some studies have also found less brain volume in obese adults and researchers theorize that it could be from inflammation.

The new study raises the possibility that inflammatory changes affecting weight, brain structure and function might begin in childhood.

The latest research confirms previous studies in children and adults, but it leaves many questions unanswered, said Marci Gluck, a research psychologist at the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases, who was not part of the research. □



In this image provided by NASA, the SpaceX Dragon capsule arrives at the International Space Station, Sunday, Dec. 8, 2019.

Associated Press

## SpaceX delivers 'mighty mice,' worms, robot to space station

By **MARCIA DUNN**  
AP Aerospace Writer

**CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. (AP)** — SpaceX made an early holiday delivery to the International Space Station on Sunday, bringing muscle-bound "mighty mice," pest-killing worms and a smart, empathetic robot.

The station commander, Italy's Luca Parmitano, used a large robot arm to grab onto the Dragon three days after its launch from Cape Canaveral. The two spacecraft soared 260 miles (420 kilometers) above the South Pacific at the time of capture.

"Whenever we welcome a new vehicle on board, we take on board also a little bit of the soul of everybody that contributed to the project, so welcome on board," Parmitano told Mission Control.

It marks the third visit for this recycled Dragon.

Flight controllers quickly secured the capsule to the orbiting lab, paving the way for the hatch to open and the unloading to begin.

The capsule holds 3 tons (2,720 kilograms) of supplies, including 40 mice for a muscle and bone experiment. Eight of them are genetically engineered with twice the normal muscle mass — and so are considered "mighty mice."

There also are 120,000 roundworms, or nematodes of a beneficial variety that are part of an agricultural study aimed at controlling pests here on Earth.

The capsule also has a large, round robot head with artificial intelligence and the ability to sense astronauts' emotions. Named

Cimon, it's an improved version of what flew up last year to be tested as an astronaut's helper.

NASA has tucked some Christmas presents in the shipment for the station's six-person crew, as well. It's SpaceX's 19th delivery to the orbiting outpost for NASA over the past seven years.

The astronauts have another shipment coming Monday — this one launched by Russia from Kazakhstan on Friday. □

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## Banana, duct tape add up to \$150,000 at Art Basel Miami

By KELLI KENNEDY

Associated Press

**MIAMI (AP)** — 3D-printed cocktails, a traffic jam sculpture made of hundreds of tons of sand and more celebrity sightings than a Kardashian Christmas party were all part of over-the-top festivities during the week of Art Basel Miami, but it was a banana that stole the show.

The most talked-about artwork of the week was titled "Comedian" — a spotty banana duct-taped to a wall by artist Maurizio Cattelan.

According to artnet News, two pieces quickly sold for \$120,000. The Paris-based Perrotin gallery raised the price to \$150,000 for the third piece, which will be sold to a museum. The bananas were bought at a local grocery store. No instructions were given on what to do as the banana ages.

The gallery did not respond to several emails from The Associated Press seeking comment. On Saturday, David Datuna removed the banana from the wall, unpeeled it and took a



In this Dec. 4, 2019 photo, gallery owner Emmanuel Perrotin poses next to Maurizio Cattelan's "Comedian" at the Art Basel exhibition in Miami Beach, Fla.

bite as a large crowd documented it with their phones.

"I respect Maurizio but it's art performance. Hungry artist," he said. "You have more? \$150,000," he joked. On Friday night, art collector Wayne Boich hosted a lavish dinner at his home that included Dan

Marino, Dwyane Wade and Chris Bosh. The after-party crowd, including Floyd Mayweather, Hannah Bronfman, and Alesso, watched a performance by Wyclef Jean, who did a throwback to the Fugees with "Ready or Not," and later brought dozens of girls onstage to dance with him

before passing the mic to "Country Grammar" singer Nelly. Rapper 2 Chainz closed out the night.

Across town, rapper Travis Scott didn't take the stage until 3:30 a.m. at a sold-out performance at 24-hour nightclub E11even. Scott stood on top of the DJ booth tossing dollar bills

into the crowd and yelling at partygoers to put away their phones and enjoy the moment.

The city of Miami Beach commissioned a million-dollar traffic jam by artist Leandro Erlich. It took 330 tons (300 metric tons) of sand to construct 66 life-sized sculptures of cars and trucks stuck in an imaginary traffic jam on the oceanfront of popular Lincoln Road. The installation alludes to Florida's fragile position in the large universal canvas, touching on climate crisis and rising sea levels.

The Shore Club South Beach also focused on global warming where a 36-foot-long (11-meter-long) floating ice sculpture inside the pool spelled out the words "HOW DARE YOU." The piece, titled "Climate Meltdown" by artist Rubem Robierb, lasted approximately eight hours.

Photographer David Yarow's picture of real-life "Wolf of Wall Street" Jordan Belfort sold for \$200,000. The piece was signed by director Martin Scorsese and Leonardo DiCaprio. □

Associated Press

## Leonard Cohen's posthumous album centers on poetry

By PABLO GORONDI

Associated Press

Leonard Cohen, "Thanks for the Dance" (Columbia/Legacy Recordings)

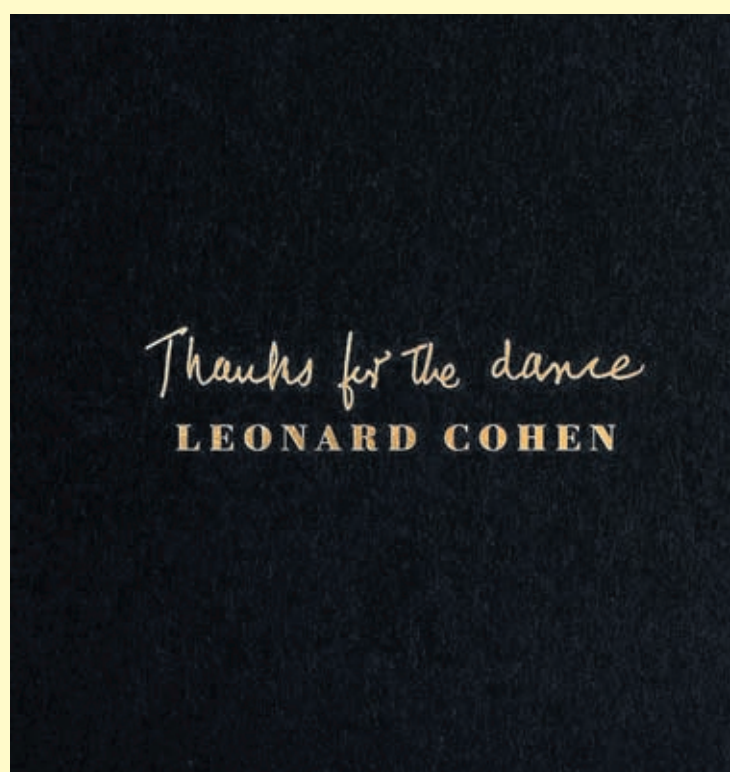
Leonard Cohen's last album, released just weeks before he passed in 2016, was "You Want It Darker," which had a sense of finality that made it a fine conclusion to his brilliant musical career. "Thanks for the Dance," on the other hand, seems to bring down the curtain on Cohen's parallel universe, the poetry he started to publish long before he began making records.

Illustrating the point, the new nine-track set is more like a Cohen spoken-word performance with very good and empathetic musical backing, most of it composed by his son, Adam.

Understated exceptions are the title track and a few lines here and there, but Cohen doesn't really sing, not that his resonant voice needs a melody to convey the experience, depth, humor, horror and beauty of his lyrics.

Expanding on recordings made mostly at the same time as the sessions for "You Want It Darker," Adam Cohen and engineer/mixer Michael Chaves searched out some of the master's previous collaborators and some new ones to complete the compositions. Among them are Sharon Robinson, Jennifer Warnes, the Shaar Hashomayim Synagogue Choir, Beck, Daniel Lanois, Feist, Javier Mas, Zac Rae, Patrick Leonard and Anjani Thomas.

"Happens to the Heart" opens the album with haunting guitar, laud and



This cover image released by Columbia/Legacy shows "Thanks for the Dance" by Leonard Cohen.

Associated Press

piano supporting Cohen's listing of a life's worth of experiences, the gentle

accompaniment from Andre de Ridder's stargaze orchestra making the

lines even more effective "I was always working steady/But I never called it art."

The title track could be a sequel to "Take This Waltz," a 1980s song with lyrics Cohen adopted from a poem by Federico García Lorca. Here the themes appear to be more personal, but just as inspired.

Other highlights include the subtle flamenco airs of "The Night of Santiago," the dark-as-night and terrifying "Puppets" and closer "Listen to the Hummingbird," a short but wise and emotional epilogue. "Thanks for the Dance" is like discovering a box of old letters or in this case, poems — from a departed loved one. It's an emotional experience that allows Cohen's great talents to be appreciated again. □



# LaBeouf thought he was finished, then he wrote 'Honey Boy'

By **JAKE COYLE**  
Associated Press

**NEW YORK (AP)** — While in court-mandated rehab following his viral-videod, racist-ranting 2017 arrest for public drunkenness and disorderly conduct, Shia LaBeouf put his childhood reflections into screenplay format. That's just what he knew. An actor since he was 10, LaBeouf's life had been a series of screenplays. Some better than

others. Few as raw and intimate as what he wrote. It was intended as a therapeutic exercise to trace the roots of LaBeouf's alcoholism (which led to that 2017 incident) and his diagnosed post-traumatic stress disorder. He wrote about himself and his father. He hadn't spoken to him in seven years. His dad, whose name is Jeffrey LaBeouf, had served in Vietnam and been a rodeo



This image released by Amazon Studios shows Shia LaBeouf in a scene from "Honey Boy."

Associated Press

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FRI 6:10 | 8:30 | 10:50  
SAT 3:50 | 6:10 | 8:30 | 10:50  
SUN 3:50 | 6:10 | 8:30  
PBP MON-THU 4:50 | 7:05 | 9:20  
FRI 4:50 | 7:05 | 9:20 | 11:35  
SAT 2:35 | 4:50 | 7:05 | 9:20 | 11:35  
SUN 2:35 | 4:50 | 7:05 | 9:20

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**WAVES**  
TAYLOR RUSSELL | KELVIN HARRISON JR.  
PBP MON-FRI 5:45  
SAT-SUN 2:50 | 5:45

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**THE COURIER**  
OLGA KURYLENKO | GARY OLDMAN  
PH MON-FRI 7:10 | 9:30  
SAT-SUN 2:30 | 4:50 | 7:10 | 9:30

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**THE GOOD LIAR**  
HELEN MIRREN | IAN MCKELLEN  
WITH SPANISH SUBTITLES  
PH MON-FRI 6:45 | 9:10  
SAT-SUN 1:55 | 4:20 | 6:45 | 9:10

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**PATI PATNI AUR WO**  
KARTIK AARYAN | BHUMI PEDNEKAR  
PBP MON-FRI 3:40 | 6:25 | 9:10  
SAT-SUN 12:55 | 3:40 | 6:25 | 9:10

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**21 BRIDGES**  
CHADWICK BOSEMAN | J.K. SIMMONS

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**FROZEN II**  
Disney  
WITH SPANISH SUBTITLES  
PH MON-THU 6:00 | 7:20 | 8:35  
FRI 6:00 | 7:20 | 8:35 | 10:00  
SAT 2:30 | 3:30 | 4:55 | 6:00 | 7:20 | 8:35 | 10:00  
SUN 2:30 | 3:30 | 4:55 | 6:00 | 7:20 | 8:35

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**CXC**  
MON-FRI 4:10 | 6:35 | 9:00  
SAT-SUN 1:45 | 4:10 | 6:35 | 9:00

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**ALSO SHOWING!**

PH MON-THU 6:00 | 8:20  
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SUN 3:40 | 6:00 | 8:20  
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FRI 5:00 | 7:15 | 9:30 | 11:45  
SAT 2:45 | 5:00 | 7:15 | 9:30 | 11:45  
SUN 2:45 | 5:00 | 7:15 | 9:30

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**Knives Out**  
DANIEL CRAIG | CHRIS EVANS  
WITH SPANISH SUBTITLES  
PBP MON-FRI 3:45 | 6:30 | 9:15  
SAT-SUN 1:00 | 3:45 | 6:30 | 9:15

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**CHARLES ANGELS**  
KRISTEN STEWART | NAOMI SCOTT  
WITH SPANISH SUBTITLES  
PBP MON-FRI 9:20

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**FORD v FERRARI**  
CHRISTIAN BALE | MATT DAMON  
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clown. While LaBeouf was a fast-rising child actor, he was his son's paid chaperone. He was aggressively supportive, riddled with jealousy and, according to the film, occasionally abusive.

LaBeouf sent his pages to his friend, Israeli-born director Alma Har'el. She at once responded that they had to turn it into a movie. "I thought she was out of her mind," says LaBeouf. "I didn't think we could get funding. I didn't think anybody was trying to make movies with me anymore. I was going to join the Peace Corps."

Instead, Har'el found the funding and they made "Honey Boy" with an added wrinkle, urged on by Har'el: LaBeouf plays his father. It's the most critically acclaimed film of LaBeouf's career.

For even an actor known for performance-art stunts (remember the paper bag over his head) and public displays of painful self-examination (LaBeouf once sat for a marathon of all his movies at New York's Angelika Film Center, an experience he compares to flipping through your high school yearbook with strangers), "Honey Boy" is something else.

The film, which Amazon Studios opens in theaters this weekend, is radically autobiographical for such a well-known movie star. As therapy writ large, it's a striking exercise in empathy in which LaBeouf wres-

ties and ultimately comes to peace with his father. LaBeouf considers it an act of exorcism and liberation. "There's something freeing about this experience and also going a little bit crazy," says LaBeouf. "Going a little bit crazy, I wish that on everyone. There's something very freeing about going a little bit crazy. Crazy is freedom."

Har'el first met LaBeouf after the actor, while rummaging in the Bob Dylan section of Los Angeles' Amoeba Records, came across her dreamy quasi-documentary portrait of three residents living in a ghost town on the shores of the Salton Sea, "Bombay Beach." LaBeouf executive produced her next film, 2016's "LoveTrue." In those and "Honey Boy," Har'el has made a habit of bending gender and identity, capturing and deconstructing what she calls "the performance of self." Har'el thought LaBeouf's first act, before they made the movie, should be to go talk to his father, who lives in Costa Rica. He did, read him the script and got his blessing, "both legally and spiritually" says Har'el.

"We're done fighting with each other," says LaBeouf. "I missed him terribly. We missed each other. Way more than I want to be right, I want my dad." Their divisions, he says, came in part from politics but more deeply grew out of the period depicted in "Honey Boy," when

LaBeouf was starring on the Disney Channel show "Even Stevens." To be closer to set, he lived for a time in a motel with his father. (LaBeouf's parents are divorced.)

Then a drug addict in recovery, LaBeouf's father (portrayed in the film as a former sex offender) was in many ways ill-suited as a parent. LaBeouf's performance is a tender portrait of a damaged man who damaged his son, but who still gave him much. By placing himself in his father's shoes, LaBeouf could see their life together through his dad's perspective.

"My dad is a fighter, a survivor. He's some kind of cockroach," says LaBeouf. "It's unbelievable how he's able to stay afloat. I can't believe he's still alive. He's a street poet. He's cowboy culture. He's Americana. He's a soldier. He's an artist. He's a comedian. He's a lover. He's a beautiful man."

Getting into character, LaBeouf, says began with finding his father's voice — a nasal sound, because years of cocaine damaged his nose, but not a nebbish one. LaBeouf also went to unusual lengths to depict his dad's physicality.

"My dad was very proud of his manhood," he says. "Throughout the course of the movie I had this big dildo in my pants. It changed the way I moved and the way I sat." □



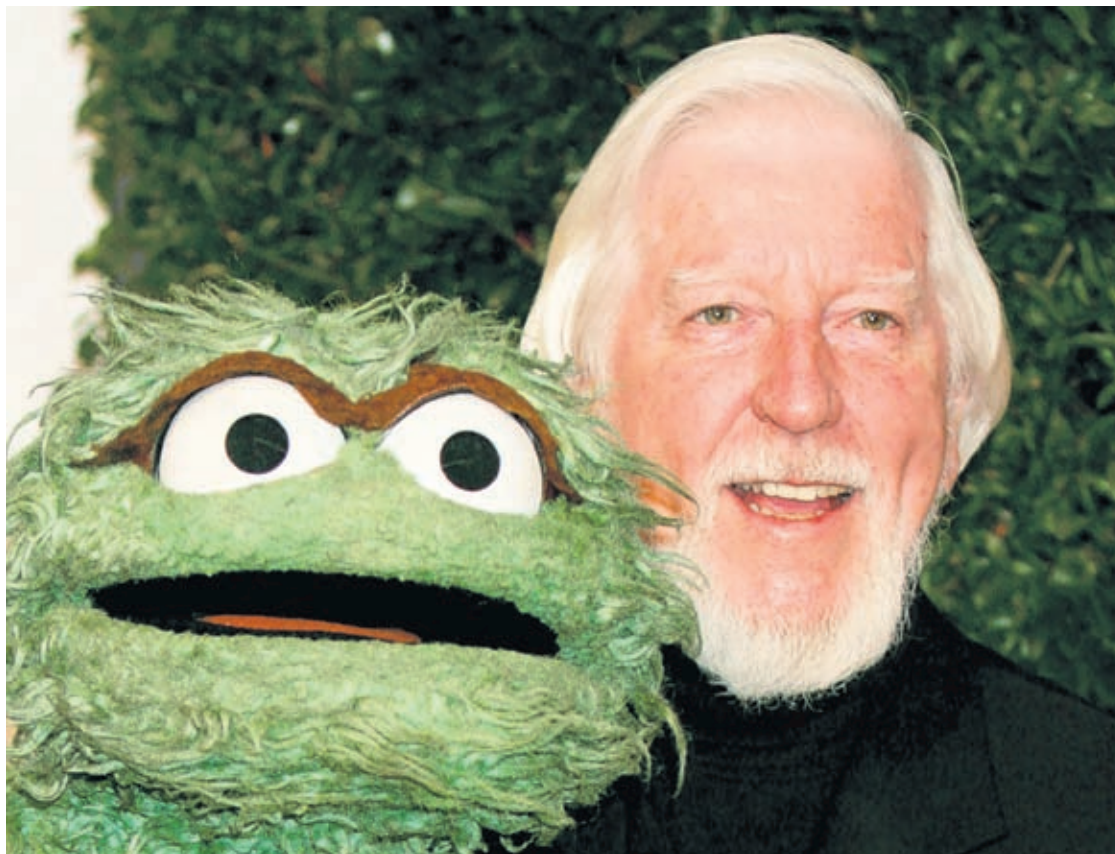
# Sesame Street puppeteer Carroll Spinney dies at age 85

By ANDREW DALTON  
Associated Press

**LOS ANGELES (AP)** — Carroll Spinney, who gave Big Bird his warmth and Oscar the Grouch his growl for nearly 50 years on "Sesame Street," died Sunday at the age of 85 at his home in Connecticut, according to the Sesame Workshop. The legendary puppeteer lived for some time with dystonia, which causes involuntary muscle contractions, the Sesame Workshop said in a statement. Spinney voiced and operated the two major Muppets from their inception in 1969 when he was 36, and performed them almost exclusively into his 80s on the PBS kids' television show that later moved to HBO. His death comes on the same day that "Sesame Street" is being honored for lifetime achievements in the arts as a Kennedy Center Honors recipient.

"Before I came to 'Sesame Street,' I didn't feel like what I was doing was very important," Spinney said when he announced his retirement in 2018. "Big Bird helped me find my purpose."

Through his two characters, Spinney gained huge fame that brought international tours, books, record albums, movie roles, and visits to the White House. "Carroll was an artistic genius whose kind and loving view of the world helped



In this Thursday, April 27, 2006, file photo, Carroll Spinney, right, who portrays "Sesame Street" characters Oscar the Grouch, left, and Big Bird, arrives for the Daytime Emmy nominee party at the Hollywood Roosevelt Hotel in Los Angeles.

Associated Press

shape and define Sesame Street from its earliest days in 1969 through five decades, and his legacy here at Sesame Workshop and in the cultural firmament will be unending," the Sesame Workshop said.

But he never became a household name.

"I may be the most unknown famous person in America," Spinney said in his 2003 memoir. "It's the bird that's famous."

Spinney gave "Sesame Street" its emotional yin and

yang, infusing the 8-foot-2 Big Bird with a childlike sweetness often used to handle sad subjects, and giving the trash can-dwelling Oscar — whose voice Spinney based on a New York cabbie — a streetwise cynicism that masked a tender core.

"I like being miserable. That makes me happy," Oscar often said. "But I don't like being happy, so that makes me miserable."

To colleagues there was no question which character

the kindly Spinney resembled.

"Big Bird is him and he is Big Bird," former "Sesame Street" head writer Norman Stiles said in a 2014 documentary on Spinney. It wasn't easy being Big Bird. To play the part, Spinney would strap a TV monitor to his chest as his only eyes to the outside. Then the giant yellow bird body was placed over him. He held his right arm aloft constantly to operate the head, and used his

left hand to operate both arms. The bird tended to slouch more as the years took their toll.

In 2015, Spinney switched to just providing the characters' voices. That year, the longtime PBS show inked a five-year pact with HBO that gave the premium cable channel the right to air new episodes nine months before they air on PBS.

Big Bird's builder Kermit Love always insisted that his design was a puppet, not a costume. But to many children, he was neither. He was real.

"Eight-year-olds have discovered to their horror that he's a puppet," Spinney told The Associated Press in 1987.

Born in 1933 in Waltham, Massachusetts, Spinney had a deeply supportive mother who built him a puppet theater after he bought his first puppet, a monkey, at age 8.

He spent four years in the U.S. Air Force after high school, then returned to Massachusetts and broke into television. He teamed up with fellow puppeteer Judy Valentine for their own daily series, then worked on a Boston version of the clown show "Bozo's Big Top." Spinney in this period had three children, Jessica, Melissa and Benjamin, all from his 1960 to 1971 marriage to Janice Spinney. □

## Baldacci's new thriller spooks and horrifies

By WAKA TSUNODA  
Associated Press

"A Minute to Midnight: an Atlee Pine Thriller," Grand Central Publishing, by David Baldacci

David Baldacci made his literary debut in 1996 with a political thriller, "Absolute Power."

He has since written novels with blinding speed, many of them action thrillers featuring men with military backgrounds.

With his latest, "A Minute to Midnight," the author changes gears and offers a murder mystery that spooks and horrifies.

The drama begins as FBI agent Atlee Pine comes upon a registered sex of-

fender trying to abduct a little girl. She overpowers the man and pulls the girl to safety, but she doesn't stop there. She beats him until he is unconscious.

In her mind, the man has become confused with the still unidentified individual who came into her bedroom when she was 6 years old, almost killing her and running off with her twin sister Mercy.

Ordered to take a vacation for having used excessive force in the incident, Pine returns to her hometown in Georgia and attempts to solve the crime that happened nearly 30 years ago.

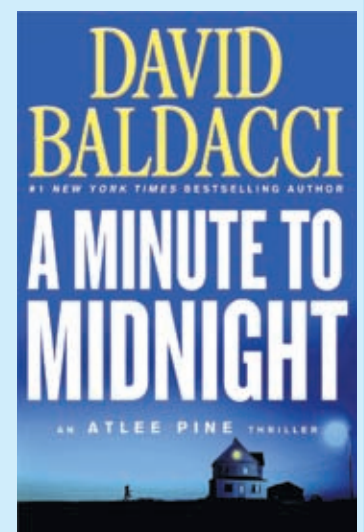
With the help of her assistant, Pine in-

terviews her former neighbors, family friends and a man who now lives in her childhood home.

Many remember the horrific incident, but no one can shed any new light on it.

Meanwhile, a woman's corpse in a wedding veil turns up, followed by another in a tuxedo and yet another in an American Civil War costume. Pine manages to solve these new cases and even discovers some surprising secrets about her parents, but the answer to her old case still evades her.

For Atlee Pine fans, this is good news because it means Baldacci has another thriller about her in the oven. □



This cover image released by Grand Central Publishing shows "A Minute to Midnight," by David Baldacci.

Associated Press



# London offers winter warmers with a festive flavor

By **LOUISE DIXON**  
Associated Press

**LONDON (AP)** — Mulled wine, warm spiced cider and hot toddies have long been British staples during winter.

Whiskey expert Ross Dennis at Dewar's Aberfeldy Distillery explains that the hot toddy comes from Scotland.

"The first mention of what we now think of as a hot toddy comes about in the 1780s. We think the name hot toddy comes from the Todian Well ... an ancient water source in Edinburgh," he says.

The traditional recipe mixes honey and hot water with a shot of whiskey, a squeeze of lemon, and a cinnamon stick and orange slice to finish.

"In the 18th century, it would have been a very common thing to mix whiskeys with other ingredients to make it more palatable. They didn't have the same cask management that we have today," Dennis says.

While the hot toddy remains popular, many cocktail bars now offer their own seasonal winter warmer.

Here are five examples from London's cocktail scene, with tips for the home mixologist:

## **BAD SANTA**

Rewind to a '70s Christmas at the kitsch seasonal pop-up "Miracle," transported from New York to the Henrietta hotel in Covent Garden. Surrounded by garish



In this Wednesday, Dec. 4, 2019 photo, a hot buttered rum is displayed at the Queen of Hoxton bar in London. While mulled wine, warm spiced cider and hot toddies have long been British staples during winter many cocktail bars in London offer their own seasonal winter warmers.

Associated Press

festive cheer, you can enjoy a "Bad Santa" served in a winking Santa mug.

"It's based on rum," bar manager Nico Brulin explains. "There's a bit of Arak, which is kind of like a variation of sugar cane. We do a date-infused oat milk and spiced vanilla syrup, and also some black chai tea. So it's like totally Christmas vibes, all the flavors you can find in one drink."

The smell of the spices, he adds, will have you "feeling like a kid again."

## **WASSAIL**

For a more sophisticated tippie, head to Manetta,

the atmospheric, art deco basement bar at the Fleming hotel in Mayfair. The hotel was established in the 19th century, and the bar became a glamorous hangout for arts and literary figures in the '30s.

Bar manager Pasquale Ferrillo makes an upmarket and extravagant version of wassail, a hot mulled cider drunk at Christmastime in medieval England in hopes of a good harvest the following year.

"I use cinnamon, fresh ginger, cloves. They bring some nice Christmas atmosphere and some sweetness to the cocktail," says Ferrillo. "Plus, of course, we use apple juice ... and we serve it in combination with cognac."

## **WARM WINTER BISHOP**

Soho cocktail bar Swift is serving a mulled wine with a difference this season.

"We thought we'd do a bit more of a richer, more alcohol-full one with bourbon, chestnut, orange and red wine. We added a little bit of chocolate as well," says senior bartender Sam Ameye.

He uses a Malbec red wine, and says bourbon enhances the flavors.

"It's that kind of spirit that,

because it has such rich, caramel, grainy flavors, works really well being heated," Ameye says. Its nutty taste also goes well with the chestnut, he says.

## **SNOWPLOW ESPRESSO**

Back in Covent Garden, at Sushisamba's latest outpost, bar manager Daniele Ziaco has created this wintery espresso martini. He starts by combining vodka with a hot double espresso and a dash of sugar, adds a measure of amaretto for a nutty taste, and then adds coconut and pistachio foam.

The top is garnished with marshmallows, pistachios

and coconut.

Grey Goose brand ambassador Ambre Morin says vodka's versatility makes it ideal for modern takes on the hot cocktail. Her advice for home cocktail makers: Be creative.

"Just try to do it step by step and add things," she says. "I would take inspiration from mulled wine, for example. Play around with that, try to twist your hot coffee or your hot chocolate. And think about flavors such as, we know that chocolate and orange match. If we think about mulled wine and pear, that's great. I would play around with flavors a lot, and spices."

## **HOT BUTTERED RUM WITH FUDGE**

Finally, over in East London at the Queen of Hoxton's rooftop bar, head bartender Chris McGovern agrees it's all about experimentation, but adds, "I'd stick to the spices that a lot of people recognize. So, your festive spices like cinnamon, clove, star anise. But then do experiment with totally new flavors like maybe pineapple, or play around with gins like hot gin and tonics.

Things that you can recognize, but then give it a festive twist."

This winter, McGovern has created a new version of his hot buttered rum punch, adding fudge for an even creamier texture. "Our hot buttered rum has always been a firm favorite with our customers. □



In this Wednesday, Dec. 4, 2019 photo, a snowplow espresso is displayed at Sushisamba, in Covent Garden in London.

Associated Press



In this Wednesday, Dec. 4, 2019 photo, the wassail cocktail is displayed at the Manetta's Bar in Fleming's Mayfair Hotel in London.

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